



# **Selected Poems**

BY JOHN MASEFIELD

GALLIPOLI  
KING COLE  
THE DREAM  
RIGHT ROYAL  
THE FAITHFUL  
LOST ENDEAVOR  
SELECTED POEMS  
A MAINSAIL HAUL  
CAPTAIN MARGARET  
MELLONEY HOLTSBUR  
THE DAFFODIL FIELDS  
THE OLD FRONT LINE  
ESTHER AND BERENICE  
MULTITUDE AND SOLITUDE  
THE WAR AND THE FUTURE  
ENSLAVED AND OTHER POEMS  
COLLECTED POEMS AND PLAYS  
GOOD FRIDAY AND OTHER POEMS  
SALT-WATER POEMS AND BALLADS  
PHILIP THE KING AND OTHER POEMS  
THE TRAGEDY OF POMPEY THE GREAT  
LOLLINGDON DOWNS AND OTHER POEMS  
THE TRAGEDY OF MAN AND OTHER PLAYS  
REYNARD THE FOX, OR THE GHOST OF HEATH RUN  
THE STORY OF A ROUND-HOUSE AND OTHER  
POEMS  
THE LOCKED CHEST AND THE SWEEPS OF  
NINETY-EIGHT  
THE EVERLASTING MERCY AND THE WIDOW IN  
THE BVE STREET



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*John W. H. H. H.*

# Selected Poems

By

John Masefield

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BY JOHN MASEFIELD

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TO  
MY WIFE





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# **Selected Poems**

*Selections from*  
**SALT-WATER BALLADS**

---

**TRADE WINDS**

In the harbour, in the island, in the Spanish  
Seas,  
Are the tiny white houses and the orange-  
trees,  
And day-long, night-long, the cool and pleas-  
ant breeze  
Of the steady Trade Winds blowing.

There is the red wine, the nutty Spanish ale,  
The shuffle of the dancers, the old salt's tale,  
The squeaking fiddle, and the souging in the  
sail  
Of the steady Trade Winds blowing.

And at nights there's fire-flies and the yellow  
moon,  
And in the ghostly palm-trees the sleepy tune  
Of the quiet voice calling me, the long low  
croon  
Of the steady Trade Winds blowing.

## SEA-FEVER

I must go down to the seas again, to the  
lonely sea and the sky,  
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer  
her by,  
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song  
and the white sail's shaking,  
And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey  
dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call  
of the running tide  
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be  
denied;  
And all I ask is a windy day with the white  
clouds flying,  
And the flung spray and the blown spume,  
and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again to the  
vagrant gypsy life,  
To the gull's way and the whale's way where  
the wind's like a whetted knife;  
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing  
fellow-rover,  
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the  
long trick's over.

## **PRAYER**

When the last sea is sailed and the last shallow charted,  
When the last field is reaped and the last harvest stored,  
When the last fire is out and the last guest departed,  
Grant the last prayer that I shall pray, Be good to me, O Lord!

And let me pass in a night at sea, a night of storm and thunder,  
In the loud crying of the wind through sail and rope and spar;  
Send me a ninth great peaceful wave to drown and roll me under  
To the cold tunny-fishes' home where the drowned galleons are.

And in the dim green quiet place far out of sight and hearing,  
Grant I may hear at whiles the wash and thresh of the sea-foam  
About the fine keen bows of the stately clippers steering  
Towards the lone northern star and the fair ports of home.



## THE WEST WIND

It's a warm wind, the west wind, full of birds'  
cries;  
I never hear the west wind but tears are in  
my eyes.  
For it comes from the west lands, the old  
brown hills,  
And April's in the west wind, and daffodils.  
It's a fine land, the west land, for hearts as  
tired as mine,  
Apple orchards blossom there, and the air's  
like wine.  
There is cool green grass there, where men  
may lie at rest,  
And the thrushes are in song there, fluting  
from the nest.  
"Will you not come home, brother? you have  
been long away,  
It's April, and blossom time, and white is the  
spray;  
And bright is the sun, brother, and warm is  
the rain,  
Will you not come home, brother, home to us  
again?  
"The young corn is green, brother, where the  
rabbits run,  
It's blue sky, and white clouds, and warm  
rain and sun.

It's song to a man's soul, brother, fire to a  
man's brain,  
To hear the wild bees and see the merry  
spring again.

"Larks are singing in the west, brother, above  
the green wheat,  
So will ye not come home, brother, and rest  
your tired feet?  
I've a balm for bruised hearts, brother, sleep  
for aching eyes,"  
Says the warm wind, the west wind, full of  
birds' cries.

*Selections from*  
**POEMS AND BALLADS**

---

**CARGOES**

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir  
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,  
With a cargo of ivory,  
And apes and peacocks,  
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the  
Isthmus,  
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-  
green shores,  
With a cargo of diamonds,  
Emeralds, amethysts,  
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke-  
stack,  
Butting through the Channel in the mad  
March days,  
With a cargo of Tyne coal,  
Road-rails, pig-lead,  
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

### AN OLD SONG RE-SUNG

I saw a ship a-sailing, a-sailing, a-sailing,  
With emeralds and rubies and sapphires in  
her hold;  
And a bosun in a blue coat bawling at the  
railing,  
Piping through a silver call that had a chain  
of gold;  
The summer wind was failing and the tall  
ship rolled.

I saw a ship a-steering, a-steering, a-steering,  
With roses in red thread worked upon her  
sails;  
With sacks of purple amethysts, the spoils  
of buccaneering,  
Skins of musky yellow wine, and silks in  
bales,  
Her merry men were cheering, hauling on the  
brails.

I saw a ship a-sinking, a-sinking, a-sinking,  
With glittering sea-water splashing on her  
    decks,  
With seamen in her spirit-room singing songs  
    and drinking,  
Pulling claret bottles down, and knocking off  
    the necks,  
The broken glass was chinking as she sank  
    among the wrecks.

### TWILIGHT

Twilight it is, and the far woods are dim, and  
    the rooks cry and call.  
Down in the valley the lamps, and the mist,  
    and a star over all,  
There by the rick, where they thresh, is the  
    drone at an end,  
Twilight it is, and I travel the road with my  
    friend.

I think of the friends who are dead, who were  
    dear long ago in the past,  
Beautiful friends who are dead, though I  
    know that death cannot last;  
Friends with the beautiful eyes that the dust  
    has defiled,  
Beautiful souls who were gentle when I was  
    a child.

## INVOCATION

O wanderer into many brains,  
O spark the emperor's purple hides,  
You sow the dusk with fiery grains  
When the gold horseman rides.  
    O beauty on the darkness hurled,  
    Be it through me you shame the world.

## A CREED

I held that when a person dies  
    His soul returns again to earth;  
Arrayed in some new flesh-disguise  
    Another mother gives him birth.  
With sturdier limbs and brighter brain  
The old soul takes the roads again.  
Such was my own belief and trust;  
    This hand, this hand that holds the pen,  
Has many a hundred times been dust  
    And turned, as dust, to dust again;  
These eyes of mine have blinked and shone  
In Thebes, in Troy, in Babylon.  
All that I rightly think or do,  
    Or make, or spoil, or bless, or blast,  
Is curse or blessing justly due  
    For sloth or effort in the past.  
My life's a statement of the sum  
Of vice indulged, or overcome.

I know that in my lives to be  
My sorry heart will ache and burn,  
And worship, unavailing,  
The woman whom I used to spurn,  
And shake to see another have  
The love I spurned, the love she gave.

And I shall know, in angry words,  
In gibes, and mocks, and many a tear,  
A carrion flock of homing-birds,  
The gibes and scorns I uttered here.  
The brave word that I failed to speak  
Will brand me dastard on the cheek.

And as I wander on the roads  
I shall be helped and healed and blessed;  
Dear words shall cheer and be as goads  
To urge to heights before unguessed.  
My road shall be the road I made;  
All that I gave shall be repaid.

So shall I fight, so shall I tread,  
In this long war beneath the stars;  
So shall a glory wreath my head,  
So shall I faint and show the scars,  
Until this case, this clogging mould,  
Be smithied all to kingly gold.

## WHEN BONY DEATH

When bony Death has chilled her gentle  
    blood,  
    And dimmed the brightness of her wistful  
    eyes,  
And changed her glorious beauty into mud  
    By his old skill in hateful wizardries;  
When an old lichened marble strives to tell  
    How sweet a grace, how red a lip was hers;  
When rheumy grey-beards say, "I knew her  
    well,"  
    Showing the grave to curious worshippers;  
When all the roses that she sowed in me  
    Have dripped their crimson petals and  
    decayed,  
Leaving no greenery on any tree  
    That her dear hands in my heart's garden  
    laid,  
Then grant, old Time, to my green mould-  
    ering skull,  
These songs may keep her memory beautiful.

## THE DEATH ROOMS

My soul has many an old decaying room  
    Hung with the ragged arras of the past,  
Where startled faces flicker in the gloom,  
    And horrid whispers set the cheek aghast.

Those dropping rooms are haunted by a death,  
A something like a worm gnawing a brain,  
That bids me heed what bitter lesson saith  
The blind wind beating on the window-  
pane.

None dwells in those old rooms: none ever  
can:

I pass them through at night with hidden  
head;  
Lock'd rotting rooms her eyes must never scan,  
Floors that her blessed feet must never  
tread.

Haunted old rooms: rooms she must never  
know,  
Where death-ticks knock and mouldering  
panels glow.

C. L. M.

In the dark womb where I began  
My mother's life made me a man.  
Through all the months of human birth  
Her beauty fed my common earth.  
I cannot see, nor breathe, nor stir,  
But through the death of some of her.

Down in the darkness of the grave  
She cannot see the life she gave.  
For all her love, she cannot tell  
Whether I use it ill or well,



Nor knock at dusty doors to find  
Her beauty dusty in the mind.

If the grave's gates could be undone,  
She would not know her little son,  
I am so grown. If we should meet  
She would pass by me in the street,  
Unless my soul's face let her see  
My sense of what she did for me.

What have I done to keep in mind  
My debt to her and womankind?  
What woman's happier life repays  
Her for those months of wretched days?  
For all my mouthless body leeches  
Ere Birth's releasing hell was reached?

What have I done, or tried, or said  
In thanks to that dear woman dead?  
Men triumph over women still,  
Men trample women's rights at will,  
And man's lust roves the world untamed.

\* \* \* \*

O grave, keep shut lest I be shamed.

## WASTE

No rose but fades: no glory but must pass:  
No hue but dims: no precious silk but frets.  
Her beauty must go underneath the grass,  
Under the long roots of the violets.

O, many glowing beauties Time has hid  
In that dark, blotting box the villain sends.  
He covers over with a coffin-lid  
Mothers and sons, and foes and lovely  
friends.  
Maids that were redly-lipped and comely-  
skinned,  
Friends that deserved a sweeter bed than  
clay.  
All are as blossoms blowing down the wind,  
Things the old envious villain sweeps away.  
And though the mutterer laughs and church  
bells toll,  
Death brings another April to the soul.

### THE WILD DUCK

Twilight; red in the west;  
Dimness; a glow on the wood.  
The teams plod home to rest.  
The wild duck come to glean.  
O souls not understood,  
What a wild cry in the pool;  
What things have the farm ducks seen  
That they cry so, huddle and cry?  
Only the soul that goes,  
Eager, eager, flying,  
Over the globe of the moon,  
Over the wood that glows;

Wings linked; necks a-strain,  
A rush and a wild crying.

\* \* \* \*

A cry of the long pain  
In the reeds of a steel lagoon  
In a land that no man knows.

*Selections from*  
**POMPEY THE GREAT**

**CHORUS**

Man is a sacred city, built of marvellous  
earth.

Life was lived nobly here to give this body  
birth.

Something was in this brain and in this eager  
hand.

Death is so dumb and blind, Death cannot  
understand.

Death drifts the brain with dust and soils the  
young limbs' glory.

Death makes women a dream and men a  
traveller's story,

Death drives the lovely soul to wander under  
the sky,

Death opens unknown doors. It is most  
grand to die.

**CHORUS**

Kneel to the beautiful women who bear us  
this strange brave fruit.

Man with his soul so noble: man half god  
and half brute.  
Women bear him in pain that he may bring  
them tears.  
He is a king on earth, he rules for a term of  
years.  
And the conqueror's prize is dust and lost  
endeavour.  
And the beaten man becomes a story for ever.  
For the gods employ strange means to bring  
their will to be.  
We are in the wise gods' hands and more we  
cannot see.

#### EPILOGUE

And all their passionate hearts are dust,  
And dust the great idea that burned  
In various flames of love and lust  
Till the world's brain was turned.

God, moving darkly in men's brains,  
Using their passions as his tool,  
Brings freedom with a tyrant's chains  
And wisdom with the fool.

Blindly and bloodily we drift,  
Our interests clog our hearts with dreams.  
God make my brooding soul a rift  
Through which a meaning gleams.

*Selections from*  
**THE EVERLASTING MERCY**

THE SALLENGE

The moonlight shone on Cabbage Walk,  
It made the limestone look like chalk.  
It was too late for any people,  
Twelve struck as we went by the steeple.  
A dog barked, and an owl was calling,  
The squire's brook was still a-falling,  
The carved heads on the church looked down  
On "Russell, Blacksmith of this Town,"  
And all the graves of all the ghosts  
Who rise on Christmas Eve in hosts  
To dance and carol in festivity  
For joy of Jesus Christ's Nativity  
(Bell-ringer Dawe and his two sons  
Beheld 'em from the bell-tower once),  
Two and two about about  
Singing the end of Advent out.

All the old monks' singing places  
Glimmered quick with flitting faces,  
Singing anthems, singing hymns  
Under carven cherubims.  
Ringer Dawe aloft could mark  
Faces at the window dark

Crowding, crowding, row on row,  
Till all the Church began to glow.  
The chapel glowed, the nave, the choir,  
All the faces became fire  
Below the eastern window high  
To see Christ's star come up the sky.  
Then they lifted hands and turned,  
And all their lifted fingers burned,  
Burned like the golden altar tallows,  
Burned like a troop of God's own Hallows,  
Bringing to mind the burning time  
When all the bells will rock and chime  
And burning saints on burning horses  
Will sweep the planets from their courses  
And loose the stars to burn up night.  
Lord, give us eyes to bear the light.

We all went quiet down the Scallenge  
Lest Police Inspector Drew should challenge.  
But 'Spector Drew was sleeping sweet,  
His head upon a charges sheet,  
Under the gas jet flaming full,  
Snorting and snoring like a bull,  
His bull cheeks puffed, his bull lips blowing,  
His ugly yellow front teeth showing.  
Just as we peeped we saw him fumble  
And scratch his head, and shift, and mumble.

Down in the lane so thin and dark  
The tan-yards stank of bitter bark,

The curate's pigeons gave a flutter,  
A cat went courting down the gutter,  
And none else stirred a foot or feather.  
The houses put their heads together,  
Talking, perhaps, so dark and sly,  
Of all the folk they'd seen go by,  
Children, and men and women, merry all,  
Who'd some day pass that way to burial.

#### EPILOGUE

How swift the summer goes,  
Forget-me-not, pink, rose.  
The young grass when I started  
And now the hay is carted,  
And now my song is ended,  
And all the summer spended;  
The blackbird's second brood  
Routs beech leaves in the wood;  
The pink and rose have speeded,  
Forget-me-not has seeded  
Only the winds that blew,  
The rain that makes things new,  
The earth that hides things old,  
And blessings manifold.

O lovely lily clean,  
O lily springing green,  
O lily bursting white,  
Dear lily of delight,  
Spring in my heart agen  
That I may flower to men.

*Selections from*

**THE WIDOW IN THE BYE STREET**

THE END

Some of life's sad ones are too strong to die,  
Grief doesn't kill them as it kills the weak,  
Sorrow is not for those who sit and cry  
Lapped in the love of turning t'other cheek,  
But for the noble souls austere and bleak  
Who have had the bitter dose and drained the  
cup

And wait for Death face fronted, standing up.

As the last man upon the sinking ship,  
Seeing the brine creep brightly on the deck,  
Hearing aloft the slatting topsails rip.  
Ripping to rags among the topmast's wreck,  
Yet hoists the new red ensign without speck,  
That she, so fair, may sink with colours  
flying,

So the old widowed mother kept from dying.

She tottered home, back to the little room.  
It was all over for her, but for life;  
She drew the blinds, and trembled in the  
gloom;

"I sat here thus when I was wedded wife;  
Sorrow sometimes, and joy; but always strife.  
Struggle to live except just at the last,  
O God, I thank Thee for the mercies past.



"Harry, my man, when we were courting;  
eh . . .

The April morning up the Cony-gree.  
How grand he looked upon our wedding day.  
'I wish we'd had the bells,' he said to me;  
And we'd the moon that evening, I and he,  
And dew come wet, oh, I remember how,  
And we come home to where I'm sitting now.

"And he lay dead here, and his son was born  
here;

He never saw his little son, his little Jim.  
And now I'm all alone here, left to mourn  
here,

And there are all his clothes, but never him.  
He's down under the prison in the dim,  
With quicklime working on him to the bone,  
The flesh I made with many and many a  
groan.

"And then he ran so, he was strong at running,  
Always a strong one, like his dad at that.  
In summertimes I done my sewing sunning,  
And he'd be sprawling, playing with the cat.  
And neighbours brought their knitting out to  
chat

Till five o'clock; he had his tea at five;  
How sweet life was when Jimmy was alive."

And sometimes she will walk the cindery mile,  
Singing, as she and Jimmy used to do,

Singing, "The parson's dog lep over a stile,"  
Along the path where water lilies grew.  
The stars are placid on the evening's blue,  
Burning like eyes so calm, so unafraid.  
On all that God has given and man has made.

Burning they watch, and mothlike owls come  
out,  
The redbreast warbles shrilly once and stops;  
The homing cowman gives his dog a shout,  
The lamps are lighted in the village shops.  
Silence; the last bird passes; in the copse  
The hazels cross the moon, a nightjar spins,  
Dew wets the grass, the nightingale begins.

Singing her crazy song the mother goes,  
Singing as though her heart were full of  
peace,  
Moths knock the petals from the dropping  
rose,  
Stars make the glimmering pool a golden  
fleece,  
The moon droops west, but still she does not  
cease,  
The little mice peep out to hear her sing,  
Until the inn-man's cockerel shakes his wing.  
And in the sunny days of hot Julys,  
The labourers going to the meadow see her  
there.

Rubbing the sleep out of their heavy eyes  
They lean upon the parapet to stare;  
They see her plaiting basil in her hair,  
Basil, the dark red wound-wort, cops of clover,  
The blue self-heal and golden Jacks of Dover.

Dully they watch her, then they turn to go  
To that high Shropshire upland of late hay;  
Her singing lingers with them as they mow,  
And many times they try it, now grave, now  
    gay,  
Till, with full throat, over the hills away,  
They lift it clear; oh, very clear it towers  
Mixed with the swish of many falling flowers.

*Selections from*

*DAUBER*

THE SETTING OF THE WATCH

Darker it grew, still darker, and the stars  
Burned golden, and the fiery fishes came.  
The wire-note loudened from the straining  
    spars;  
The sheet-blocks clacked together always the  
    same;  
The rushing fishes streaked the seas with  
    flame,

Racing the one speed noble as their own :  
What unknown joy was in those fish  
unknown !

Names in the darkness passed and voices  
cried ;  
The red spark glowed and died, the faces  
seemed  
As things remembered when a brain has died,  
To all but high intensities deeply dreamed.  
Like hissing spears the fishes' fire streamed,  
And on the clipper rushed with tossing mast,  
A bath of flame broke round her as she  
passed.

The watch was set, the night came, and the  
men  
Hid from the moon in shadowed nooks to  
sleep,  
Bunched like the dead ; still, like the dead, as  
when  
Plague in a city leaves none even to weep.  
The ship's track brightened to a mile-broad  
sweep ;  
The mate there felt her pulse, and eyed the  
spars :  
South-west by south she staggered under the  
stars.

## THE WATCH BELOW

Down in his bunk the Dauber lay awake  
Thinking of his unfitness for the sea.  
Each failure, each derision, each mistake,  
There in the life not made for such as he;  
A morning grim with trouble sure to be,  
A noon of pain from failure, and a night  
Bitter with men's contemning and despite.

This in the first beginning, the green leaf,  
Still in the Trades before bad weather fell;  
What harvest would he reap of hate and grief  
When the loud Horn made every life a hell?  
When the sick ship lay over, clanging her  
    bell,  
And no time came for painting or for  
    drawing,  
But all hands fought, and icy death came  
    clawing?

The green bunk curtains moved, the brass  
    rings clicked,  
The Cook cursed in his sleep, turning and  
    turning,  
The moonbeam's moving finger touched and  
    picked,  
And all the stars in all the sky were burning.  
"This is the art I've come for, and am  
    learning,

The sea and ships and men and traveling  
things.

It is most proud, whatever pain it brings."

He leaned upon his arm and watched the light  
Sliding and fading to the steady roll;

This he would some day paint, the ship at  
night,

And sleeping seamen tired to the soul;  
The space below the bunks as black as coal,  
Gleams upon chests, upon the unlit lamp,  
The ranging door-hook, and the locker clamp.

This he would paint, and that, and all these  
scenes,

And proud ships carrying on, and men their  
minds,

And blues of rollers toppling into greens,  
And shattering into white that bursts and  
blinds,

And scattering ships running erect like hinds,  
And men in oilskins beating down a sail  
High on the yellow yard, in snow, in hail,

With faces ducked down from the slanting  
drive

Of half-thawed hail mixed with half-frozen  
spray,

The roaring canvas, like a thing alive,  
Shaking the mast, knocking their hands away,

The foot-ropes jerking to the tug and sway,  
The savage eyes salt-reddened at the rims,  
And icicles on the south-wester brims.

And sunnier scenes would grow under his  
brush,  
The tropic dawn with all things dropping  
dew,  
The darkness and the wonder and the hush,  
The insensate grey before the marvel grew;  
Then the veil lifted from the trembling blue,  
The walls of sky burst in, the flower, the rose,  
All the expanse of heaven a mind that glows.

He turned out of his bunk; the Cook still  
tossed,  
One of the other two spoke in his sleep,  
A cockroach scuttled where the moonbeam  
crossed;  
Outside there was the ship, the night, the  
deep.  
"It is worth while," the youth said; "I will  
keep  
To my resolve, I'll learn to paint all this.  
My Lord, my God, how beautiful it is!"

Outside was the ship's rush to the wind's  
hurry,  
A resonant wire-hum from every rope,  
The broadening bow-wash in a fiery flurry,

The leaning masts in their majestic slope,  
And all things strange with moonlight: filled  
    with hope  
By all that beauty going as man bade,  
He turned and slept in peace. Eight bells  
    were made.

#### THE HORN

Even now they shifted suits of sails; they  
    bent  
The storm-suit ready for the expected time;  
The mighty wester that the Plate had lent  
Had brought them far into the wintry clime.  
At dawn, out of the shadow, there was rime,  
The dim Magellan Clouds were frosty clear,  
The wind had edge, the testing-time was near.

And then he wondered if the tales were lies  
Told by old hands to terrify the new,  
For, since the ship left England, only twice  
Had there been need to start a sheet or clew,  
Then only royals, for an hour or two,  
And no seas broke aboard, nor was it cold.  
What were these gales of which the stories  
    told?

The thought went by. He had heard the  
    Bosun tell  
Too often, and too fiercely, not to know



That being off the Horn in June is hell:  
Hell of continual toil in ice and snow,  
Frostbitten hell in which the westers blow  
Shrieking for days on end, in which the seas  
Gulf the starved seamen till their marrows  
freeze.

Such was the weather he might look to find,  
Such was the work expected: there remained  
Firmly to set his teeth, resolve his mind,  
And be the first, however much it pained,  
And bring his honour round the Horn un-  
stained,  
And win his mates' respect; and thence, un-  
tainted,  
Be ranked as a man however much he painted.

He drew deep breath; a gantline swayed aloft  
A lower topsail, hard with rope and leather,  
Such as men's frozen fingers fight with oft  
Below the Ramirez in Cape Horn weather.  
The arms upon the yard hove all together,  
Lighting the head along; a thought occurred  
Within the painter's brain like a bright bird:

That this, and so much like it, of man's toil,  
Compass'd by naked manhood in strange  
places,  
Was all heroic, but outside the coil  
Within which modern art gleams or grimaces;

That if he drew that line of sailors' faces  
Sweating the sail, their passionate play and  
change,  
It would be new, and wonderful, and strange.  
That that was what his work meant; it would  
be  
A training in new vision, a revealing  
Of passionate men in battle with the sea,  
High on an unseen stage, shaking and  
reeling;  
And men through him would understand  
their feeling,  
Their might, their misery, their tragic power,  
And all by suffering pain a little hour;  
High on the yard with them, feeling their  
pain,  
Battling with them; and it had not been done.  
He was a door to new worlds in the brain,  
A window opening letting in the sun,  
A voice saying, "Thus is bread fetched and  
ports won,  
And life lived out at sea where men exist  
Solely by man's strong brain and sturdy  
wrist."

So he decided, as he cleaned his brasses,  
Hearing without, aloft, the curse, the shout  
Where the taut gantline passes and repasses,  
Heaving new topsails to be lighted out.

It was most proud, however self might doubt,  
To share man's tragic toil and paint it true.  
He took the offered Fate: this he would do.

That night the snow fell between six and  
seven,

A little feathery fall so light, so dry,  
An aimless dust out of a confused heaven,  
Upon an air no steadier than a sigh;  
The powder dusted down and wandered by  
So purposeless, so many, and so cold,  
Then died, and the wind ceased and the ship  
rolled—

Rolled till she clanged, rolled till the brain  
was tired,

Marking the acme of the heavens, the pause  
While the sea-beauty rested and respired,  
Drinking great draughts of roller at her  
hawse.

Flutters of snow came aimless upon flaws.

"Lock up your paints," the Mate said, speak-  
ing light:

"This is the Horn; you'll join my watch to-  
night!"

#### THE SOUTH-WEST WIND

All through the windless night the clipper  
rolled

In a great swell with oily gradual heaves

Which rolled her down until her time-bells  
toll'd,  
Clang, and the weltering water moaned like  
beeves.  
The thundering rattle of slatting shook the  
sheaves,  
Startles of water made the swing ports gush,  
The sea was moaning and sighing and saying  
"Hush!"

It was all black and starless. Peering down  
Into the water, trying to pierce the gloom,  
One saw a dim, smooth, oily glitter of brown  
Heaving and dying away and leaving room  
For yet another. Like the march of doom  
Came those great powers of marching  
silences;  
Then fog came down, dead-cold, and hid the  
seas.

They set the Dauber to the foghorn. There  
He stood upon the poop, making to sound  
Out of the pump the sailors' nasal blare,  
Listening lest ice should make the note  
resound.  
She bayed there like a solitary hound  
Lost in a covert; all the watch she bayed.  
The fog, come closelier down, no answer  
made.

Denser it grew, until the ship was lost.  
The elemental hid her; she was merged  
In muffings of dark death, like a man's ghost,  
New to the change of death, yet thither urged.  
Then from the hidden waters something  
surged—

Mournful, despairing, great, greater than  
speech,  
A noise like one slow wave on a still beach.

Mournful, and then again mournful, and still  
Out of the night that mighty voice arose;  
The Dauber at his foghorn felt the thrill.  
Who rode that desolate sea? What forms  
were those?

Mournful, from things defeated, in the throes  
Of memory of some conquered hunting-  
ground,  
Out of the night of death arose the sound.

"Whales!" said the mate. They stayed there  
all night long

Answering the horn. Out of the night they  
spoke,

Defeated creatures who had suffered wrong,  
But were still noble underneath the stroke.  
They filled the darkness when the Dauber  
woke;

The men came peering to the rail to hear,  
And the sea sighed, and the fog rose up sheer.

So the night past, but then no morning  
broke—

Only a something showed that night was  
dead.

A sea-bird, cackling like a devil, spoke,  
And the fog drew away and hung like lead.  
Like mighty cliffs it shaped, sullen and red;  
Like glowering gods at watch it did appear,  
And sometimes drew away, and then drew  
near.

Like islands, and like chasms, and like hell,  
But always mighty and red, gloomy and  
ruddy,

Shutting the visible sea in like a well;  
Slow heaving in vast ripples, blank and  
muddy,

Where the sun should have risen it streaked  
bloody.

The day was still-born; all the sea-fowl  
scattering

Splashed the still water, mewing, hovering,  
clattering.

Then Polar snow came down little and light,  
Till all the sky was hidden by the small,  
Most multitudinous drift of dirty white  
Tumbling and wavering down and covering  
all;

Covering the sky, the sea, the clipper tall,

Furring the ropes with white, casing the  
mast,

Coming on no known air, but blowing past.

And all the air seemed full of gradual moan,  
As though in those cloud-chasms the horns  
were blowing

The mort for gods cast out and overthrown,  
Or for the eyeless sun plucked out and going.  
Slow the low gradual moan came in the  
snowing;

The Dauber felt the prelude had begun.

The snowstorm fluttered by; he saw the sun

Show and pass by, gleam from one towering  
prison

Into another, vaster and more grim,  
Which in dull crags of darkness had arisen  
To muffle-to a final door on him.

The gods upon the dull crags lowered dim,  
The pigeons chattered, quarrelling in the  
track.

In the southwest the dimness dulled to black.

Then came the cry of "Call all hands on  
deck!"

The Dauber knew its meaning; it was come:  
Cape Horn, that tramples beauty into wreck,  
And crumples steel and smites the strong  
man dumb.

Down clattered flying kites and staysails:  
some  
Sang out in quick, high calls; the fairleads  
skirled,  
And from the south-west came the end of the  
world.

WE THEREFORE COMMIT OUR BROTHER

Night fell, and all night long the Dauber lay  
Covered upon the table; all night long  
The pitiless storm exulted at her prey,  
Huddling the waters with her icy thong.  
But to the covered shape she did no wrong.  
He lay beneath the sailcloth. Bell by bell  
The night wore through; the stars rose, the  
stars fell.

Blowing most pitiless cold out of clear sky  
The wind roared all night long; and all night  
through  
The green seas on the deck went washing by,  
Flooding the half-deck; bitter hard it blew.  
But little of it all the Dauber knew;  
The sopping bunks, the floating chests, the wet,  
The darkness, and the misery, and the sweat.  
He was off duty. So it blew all night,  
And when the watches changed the men  
would come



Dripping within the door to strike a light  
And stare upon the Dauber lying dumb,  
And say, "He come a cruel thump, poor  
chum."

Or, "He'd a-been a fine big man"; or,  
"He . . .

A smart young seaman he was getting to be."

Or, "Damn it all, it's what we've all to  
face! . . .

I knew another fellow one time . . ." then  
Came a strange tale of death in a strange  
place

Out on the sea, in ships, with wandering  
men.

In many ways Death puts us in to pen.  
The reefers came down tired and looked and  
slept.

Below the skylight little dribbles crept.

Along the painted woodwork, glistening,  
slow,

Following the roll and dripping, never fast,  
But dripping on the quiet form below,  
Like passing time talking to time long past.  
And all night long "Ai, ai!" went the wind's  
blast,

And creaming water swished below the pale,  
Unheeding body stretched beneath the sail.

At dawn they sewed him up, and at eight  
bells

They bore him to the gangway, wading deep,  
Through the green-clutching, white-toothed  
water-hells

That flung his carriers over in their sweep.  
They laid an old red ensign on the heap,  
And all hands stood bareheaded, stooping,  
swaying,

Washed by the sea while the old man was  
praying

Out of a borrowed prayer-book. At a sign  
They twitched the ensign back and tipped  
the grating.

A creamier bubbling broke the bubbling brine.  
The muffled figure tilted to the weighting;  
It dwindled slowly down, slowly gyrating.  
Some craned to see; it dimmed, it dis-  
appeared;

The last green milky bubble blinked and  
cleared.

"Mister, shake out your reefs," the Captain  
called.

"Out topsail reefs!" the Mate cried; then all  
hands

Hurried, the great sails shook, and all hands  
hailed,

Singing that desolate song of lonely lands,  
Of how a lover came in dripping bands,  
Green with the wet and cold, to tell his lover  
That Death was in the sea, and all was over.

Fair came the falling wind; a seaman said  
The Dauber was a Jonah; once again  
The clipper held her course, showing red lead,  
Shattering the sea-tops into golden rain.  
The waves bowed down before her like blown  
grain;  
Onwards she thundered, on; her voyage was  
short,  
Before the tier's bells rang her into port.

Cheerily they rang her in, those beating bells,  
The new-come beauty stately from the sea,  
Whitening the blue heave of the drowsy  
swells,  
Treading the bubbles down. With three  
times three  
They cheered her moving beauty in, and she  
Came to her berth so noble, so superb;  
Swayed like a queen, and answered to the  
curb.

Then in the sunset's flush they went aloft,  
And unbent sails in that most lovely hour,  
When the light gentles and the wind is soft,

And beauty in the heart breaks like a flower.  
Working aloft they saw the mountain tower,  
Snow to the peak; they heard the launchmen  
    shout;  
And bright along the bay the lights came out.

And then the night fell dark, and all night  
    long  
The pointed mountain pointed at the stars,  
Frozen, alert, austere; the eagle's song  
Screamed from her desolate screes and splin-  
    tered scars.  
On her intense crags where the air is sparse  
The stars looked down; their many golden  
    eyes  
Watched her and burned, burned out, and  
    came to rise.

Silent the finger of the summit stood,  
Icy in pure, thin air, glittering with snows.  
Then the sun's coming turned the peak to  
    blood,  
And in the rest-house the muleteers arose.  
And all day long, where only the eagle goes,  
Stones, loosened by the sun, fall; the stones  
    falling  
Fill empty gorge on gorge with echoes  
    calling.

*Selections from*  
**THE DAFFODIL FIELDS**

**I**

Between the barren pasture and the wood  
There is a patch of poultry-stricken grass,  
Where, in old time, Ryemeadows' Farmhouse  
stood,

And human fate brought tragic things to  
pass.

A spring comes bubbling up there, cold as  
glass,

It bubbles down, crusting the leaves with  
lime,

Babbling the selfsame song that it has sung  
through time.

Ducks gobble at the selvage of the brook,  
But still it slips away. the cold hill-spring,  
Past the Ryemeadows' lonely woodland nook  
Where many a stubble grey-goose preens her  
wing,

On, by the woodland side. You hear it sing  
Past the lone copse where poachers set their  
wires,

Past the green hill once grim with sacrificial  
fires.

Another water joins it; then it turns,  
Runs through the Ponton Wood, still turn-  
ing west,

Past foxgloves, Canterbury bells, and ferns,  
And many a blackbird's, many a thrush's  
nest;

The cattle tread it there; then, with a zest  
It sparkles out, babbling its pretty chatter  
Through Foxholes Farm, where it gives  
white-faced cattle water.

Under the road it runs, and now it slips  
Past the great ploughland, babbling, drop and  
linn,  
To the moss'd stumps of elm trees which it  
lips,  
And blackberry-bramble-trails where eddies  
spin.

Then, on its left, some short-grassed fields  
begin,  
Red-clayed and pleasant, which the young  
spring fills  
With the never-quiet joy of dancing daffo-  
dils.

There are three fields where daffodils are  
found;  
The grass is dotted blue-grey with their  
leaves;  
Their nodding beauty shakes along the  
ground  
Up to a fir-clump shutting out the eaves  
Of an old farm where always the wind grieves

High in the fir boughs, moaning; people call  
This farm The Roughs, but some call it the  
Poor Maid's Hall.

There, when the first green shoots of tender  
corn

Show on the plough; when the first drift of  
white

Stars the black branches of the spiky thorn,  
And afternoons are warm and evenings light,  
The shivering daffodils do take delight,  
Shaking beside the brook, and grass comes  
green,

And blue dog-violets come and glistening  
celandine.

And there the pickers come, picking for town  
Those dancing daffodils; all day they pick;  
Hard-featured women, weather-beaten brown,  
Or swarthy-red, the colour of old brick.

At noon they break their meats under the  
rick.

The smoke of all three farms lifts blue in air  
As though man's passionate mind had never  
suffered there.

And sometimes as they rest an old man  
comes,

Shepherd or carter, to the hedgerow-side,  
And looks upon their gangrel tribe, and  
hums,

And thinks all gone to wreck since master  
died;  
And sighs over a passionate harvest-tide  
Which Death's red sickle reaped under those  
hills,  
There, in the quiet fields among the daffodils.

#### THE RIVER

The steaming river loitered like old blood  
On which the tugboat bearing Michael beat,  
Past whitened horse bones sticking in the  
mud.  
The reed stems looked like metal in the heat.  
Then the banks fell away, and there were  
neat,  
Red herds of sullen cattle drifting slow.  
A fish leaped, making rings, making the dead  
blood flow.  
Wormed hard-wood piles were driv'n in the  
river bank,  
The steamer threshed alongside with sick  
screws  
Churning the mud below her till it stank;  
Big gassy butcher-bubbles burst on the ooze.  
There Michael went ashore; as glad to lose  
One not a native there, the Gauchos flung  
His broken gear ashore, one waved, a bell was  
rung.



The bowfast was cast off, the screw revolved,  
Making a bloodier bubbling; rattling rope  
Fell to the hatch, the engine's tune resolved  
Into its steadier beat of rise and slope;  
The steamer went her way; and Michael's  
hope

Died as she lessened; he was there alone.  
The lowing of the cattle made a gradual  
moan.

He thought of Mary, but the thought was  
dim;

That was another life, lived long before.  
His mind was in new worlds which altered  
him.

The startling present left no room for more.  
The sullen river lipped, the sky, the shore  
Were vaster than of old, and lonely, lonely.  
Sky and low hills of grass and moaning cattle  
only.

#### THE RETURN

Soon he was at the Foxholes, at the place  
Whither, from over sea, his heart had turned  
Often at evening-ends in times of grace.  
But little outward change his eye discerned;  
A red rose at her bedroom window burned,  
Just as before. Even as of old the wasps  
Poised at the yellow plums; the gate creaked  
on its hasps

And the white fantails sidled on the roof  
Just as before; their pink feet, even as of old,  
Printed the frosty morning's rime with  
proof.

Still the zew-tallat's thatch was green with  
mould;

The apples on the withered boughs were gold.  
Men and the times were changed: "And I,"  
said he,

"Will go and not return, since she is not  
for me.

"I'll go, for it would be a scurvy thing  
To spoil her marriage, and besides, she cares  
For that half-priest she married with the  
ring.

Small joy for me in seeing how she wears,  
Or seeing what he takes and what she shares.  
That beauty and those ways: she had such  
ways,

There in the daffodils in those old April days.

So with an impulse of good will he turned,  
Leaving that place of daffodils; the road  
Was paven sharp with memories which  
burned;

He trod them strongly under as he strode.  
At the Green Turning's forge the furnace  
glowed;

Red dithying sparks flew from the crumpled  
soft

Fold from the fire's heart; down clanged the  
hammers oft.

That was a bitter place to pass, for there  
Mary and he had often, often stayed  
To watch the horseshoe growing in the glare.  
It was a tryst in childhood when they  
strayed.

There was a stile beside the forge; he laid  
His elbows on it, leaning, looking down.  
The river-valley stretched with great trees  
turning brown.

Infinite, too, because it reached the sky,  
And distant spires arose and distant smoke;  
The whiteness on the blue went stilly by;  
Only the clinking forge the stillness broke.  
Ryemeadows brook was there; The Roughs,  
the oak

Where the White Woman walked; the black  
firs showed  
Around the Occleve homestead, Mary's new  
abode.

A long, long time he gazed at that fair place,  
So well remembered from of old; he sighed.  
"I will go down and look upon her face,  
See her again, whatever may betide.  
Hell is my future; I shall soon have died,

But I will take to hell one memory more;  
She shall not see nor know; I shall be gone  
before;

"Before they turn the dogs upon me, even.  
I do not mean to speak; but only see.  
Even the devil gets a peep at heaven;  
One peep at her shall come to hell with me;  
One peep at her, no matter what may be."  
He crossed the stile and hurried down the  
slope.

Remembered trees and hedges gave a zest to  
hope.

\* \* \* \*

A low brick wall with privet shrubs beyond  
Ringed in The Roughs upon the side he  
neared;

Eastward some bramble bushes cloaked the  
pond;

Westward was barley-stubble not yet cleared.  
He thrust aside the privet boughs and peered.  
The drooping fir trees let their darkness trail  
Black like a pirate's masts bound under easy  
sail.

The garden with its autumn flowers was  
there;

Few that his wayward memory linked with  
her.

Summer had burnt the summer flowers bare,

But honey-hunting bees still made a stir.  
Sprigs were still bluish on the lavender,  
And bluish daisies budded, bright flies  
poised;  
The wren upon the tree-stump carolled  
cheery-voiced.

He could not see her there. Windows were  
wide,  
Late wasps were cruising, and the curtains  
shook.  
Smoke, like the house's breathing, floated,  
sighed;  
Among the trembling firs strange ways it  
took.  
But still no Mary's presence blessed his look;  
The house was still as if deserted, hushed.  
Faint fragrance hung about it as if herbs were  
crushed.

Fragrance that gave his memory's guard a  
hint  
Of times long past, of reapers in the corn,  
Bruising with heavy boots the stalks of mint,  
When first the berry reddens on the thorn.  
Memories of her that fragrance brought.  
Forlorn

That vigil of the watching outcast grew;  
He crept towards the kitchen, sheltered by  
a yew.

The windows of the kitchen opened wide.  
Again the fragrance came; a woman spoke;  
Old Mrs. Occleve talked to one inside.  
A smell of cooking filled a gust of smoke.  
Then fragrance once again, for herbs were  
    broke;  
Pourri was being made; the listener heard  
Things lifted and laid down, bruised into  
    sweetness, stirred.

While an old woman made remarks to one  
Who was not the beloved: Michael learned  
That Roger's wife at Upton had a son,  
And that the red geraniums should be  
    turned;  
A hen was missing, and a rick was burned;  
Our Lord commanded patience; here it  
    broke;  
The window closed, it made the kitchen chim-  
ney smoke.

Steps clacked on flagstones to the outer door;  
A dairymaid, whom he remembered well,  
Lined, now, with age, and greyer than before,  
Rang a cracked cow-bell for the dinner-bell.  
He saw the dining-room; he could not tell  
If Mary were within: inly he knew  
That she was coming now, that she would be  
    in blue.

Blue with a silver locket at the throat,  
And that she would be there, within there,  
near,

With the little blushes that he knew by rote,  
And the grey eyes so steadfast and so dear,  
The voice, pure like the nature, true and clear,  
Speaking to her belov'd within the room.  
The gate clicked, Lion came: the outcast  
hugged the gloom,

Watching intently from below the boughs,  
While Lion cleared his riding-boots of clay,  
Eyed the high clouds and went within the  
house.

His eyes looked troubled, and his hair looked  
grey.

Dinner began within with much to say.  
Old Occleve roared aloud at his own joke.  
Mary, it seemed, was gone; the loved voice  
never spoke.

Nor could her lover see her from the yew;  
She was not there at table; she was ill,  
Ill, or away perhaps—he wished he knew.  
Away, perhaps, for Occleve bellowed still.  
“If sick,” he thought, “the maid or Lion will  
Take food to her.” He watched; the dinner  
ended.

The staircase was not used; none climbed it,  
none descended.

"Not here," he thought; but wishing to be sure,

He waited till the Occleves went to field,  
Then followed, round the house, another lure,  
Using the well-known privet as his shield.

He meant to run a risk; his heart was steeled.  
He knew of old which bedroom would be hers;

He crouched upon the north front in among  
the firs.

The house stared at him with its red-brick  
blank,

Its vacant window-eyes; its open door,  
With old wrought bridle ring-hooks at each  
flank,

Swayed on a creaking hinge as the wind bore.  
Nothing had changed; the house was as  
before,

The dull red brick, the windows sealed or  
wide:

"I will go in," he said. He rose and stepped  
inside.

None could have seen him coming; all was  
still;

He listened in the doorway for a sign.

Above, a rafter creaked, a stir, a thrill

Moved, till the frames clacked on the picture  
line.



"Old Mother Occleve sleeps, the servants  
dine,"

He muttered, listening. "Hush." A silence  
brooded.

Far off the kitchen dinner clattered; he  
intruded.

Still, to his right, the best room door was  
locked.

Another door was at his left; he stayed.

Within, a stately timepiece ticked and tocked  
To one who slumbered breathing deep; it  
made

An image of Time's going and man's trade.  
He looked: Old Mother Occleve lay asleep,  
Hands crossed upon her knitting, rosy,  
breathing deep.

He tiptoed up the stairs which creaked and  
cracked.

The landing creaked; the shut doors, painted  
gray,

Loomed, as if shutting in some dreadful act.  
The nodding frames seemed ready to betray.  
The east room had been closed in Michael's  
day,

Being the best; but now he guessed it hers;  
The fields of daffodils lay next it, past the  
firs.

Just as he reached the landing, Lion cried,  
Somewhere below, "I'll get it." Lion's feet  
Struck on the flagstones with a hasty stride,  
"He's coming up," thought Michael, "we shall  
meet,"

He snatched the nearest door for his retreat,  
Opened with thieves' swift silence, dared not  
close,  
But stood within, behind it. Lion's footsteps  
rose,

Running two steps at once, while Michael  
stood,  
Not breathing, only knowing that the room  
Was someone's bedroom smelling of old  
wood,  
Hung with engravings of the day of doom.  
The footsteps stopped; and Lion called, to  
whom?  
A gentle question, tapping at a door,  
And Michael shifted feet, and creakings took  
the floor.

The footsteps recommenced, a door-catch  
clacked;  
Within an eastern room the footsteps passed.  
Drawers were pulled loudly open and ran-  
sacked,  
Chattels were thrust aside and overcast.

What could the thing be that he sought? At  
last  
His voice said, "Here it is." The wormèd  
floor  
Creaked with returning footsteps down the  
corridor.

The footsteps came as though the walker  
read,  
Or added rows of figures by the way;  
There was much hesitation in the tread;  
Lion seemed pondering which, to go or stay;  
Then, seeing the door, which covered  
Michael, sway,  
He swiftly crossed and shut it. "Always one  
For order," Michael muttered; "Now be swift,  
my son."

The action seemed to break the walker's  
mood;  
The footsteps passed downstairs, along the  
hall,  
Out at the door and off towards the wood.  
"Gone," Michael muttered. "Now to hazard  
all."  
Outside, the frames still nodded on the wall.  
Michael stepped swiftly up the floor to try  
The door where Lion tapped and waited for  
reply.

It was the eastmost of the rooms which look  
Over the fields of daffodils; the bound  
Scanned from its windows is Ryemeadows  
brook,  
Banked by gnarled apple trees and rising  
ground.  
Most gently Michael tapped; he heard no  
sound,  
Only the blind-pull tapping with the wind;  
The kitchen-door was opened; kitchen-clatter  
dinned.

A woman walked along the hall below,  
Humming; a maid, he judged; the footsteps  
died,  
Listening intently still, he heard them go,  
Then swiftly turned the knob and went in-  
side.  
The blind-pull at the window volleyed wide;  
The curtains streamed out like a waterfall;  
The pictures of the fox-hunt clacked along  
the wall.

No one was there; no one; the room was hers.  
A book of praise lay open on the bed;  
The clothes-press smelt of many lavenders,  
Her spirit stamped the room; herself was  
fled.

Here she found peace of soul like daily bread,

Here, with her lover Lion; Michael gazed;  
He would have been the sharer had he not  
been crazed.

He took the love-gift handkerchief again;  
He laid it on her table, near the glass,  
So opened that the embroidered name was  
plain;

"Plain," he exclaimed, "she cannot let it pass.  
It stands and speaks for me as bold as brass.  
My answer, my heart's cry, to tell her this,  
That she is still my darling; all she was  
she is.

"So she will know at least that she was wrong,  
That underneath the blindness I was true.  
Fate is the strongest thing, though men are  
strong;

Out from beyond life I was sealed to you.  
But my blind ways destroyed the cords that  
drew;

And now, the evil done, I know my need;  
Fate has his way with those who mar what  
is decreed.

"And now, good-bye." He closed the door  
behind him,

Then stopt, with firm swift footstep down the  
stair,

Meaning to go where she would never find  
him;

He would go down through darkness to  
despair.

Out at the door he stept; the autumn air  
Came fresh upon his face; none saw him go.  
"Good-bye, my love," he muttered; "it is  
better so."

Soon he was on the high road, out of sight  
Of valley and farm; soon he could see no  
more

The oast-house pointing finger take the light  
As tumbling pigeons glittered over; nor  
Could he behold the wind-vane gilded o'er,  
Swinging above the church; the road swung  
round.

"Now, the last look," he cried: he saw that  
holy ground.

"Good-bye," he cried; he could behold it all,  
Spread out as in a picture; but so clear  
That the gold apple stood out from the wall;  
Like a red jewel stood the grazing steer.  
Precise, intensely coloured, all brought near,  
As in a vision, lay that holy ground.

"Mary is there," he moaned, "and I am out-  
ward bound.

"I never saw this place so beautiful,  
Never like this. I never saw it glow.  
Spirit is on this place; it fills it full.

So let the die be cast; I will not go.  
But I will see her face to face and know  
From her own lips what thoughts she has  
    of me;  
And if disaster come: right; let disaster be."

Back, by another way, he turned. The sun  
Fired the yew-tops in the Roman woods.  
Lights in the valley twinkled one by one,  
The starlings whirled in dropping multi-  
    tudes.

Dusk fingered into one earth's many moods,  
Back to The Roughs he walked; he neared  
    the brook;

A lamp burned in the farm; he saw; his  
    fingers shook.

He had to cross the brook, to cross a field  
Where daffodils were thick when years were  
    young.

Then, were she there, his fortunes should be  
    sealed.

Down the mud trackway to the brook he  
    swung;

Then while the passion trembled on his  
    tongue,

Dim, by the dim bridge-stile, he seemed to  
    see

A figure standing mute; a woman—it was she.

She stood quite stilly, waiting for him there.  
She did not seem surprised; the meeting  
seemed

Planned from all time by powers in the air  
To change their human fates; he even deemed  
That in another life this thing had gleamed,  
This meeting by the bridge. He said, "It's  
you."

"Yes, I," she said, "who else? You must have  
known; you knew

"That I should come here to the brook to see,  
After your message." "You were out," he  
said.

"Gone, and I did not know where you could  
be.

Where were you, Mary, when the thing was  
laid?"

"Old Mrs. Cale is dying, and I stayed  
Longer than usual, while I read the Word.  
You could have hardly gone." She paused,  
her bosom stirred.

"Mary, I sinned," he said. "Not that, dear,  
no,"

She said; "but, oh, you were unkind, unkind,  
Never to write a word and leave me so,  
But out of sight with you is out of mind."  
"Mary, I sinned," he said, "and I was blind.



Oh, my beloved, are you Lion's wife?"  
"Belov'd sounds strange," she answered, "in  
my present life.

"But it is sweet to hear it, all the same.  
It is a language little heard by me  
Alone, in that man's keeping, with my shame.  
I never thought such miseries could be.  
I was so happy in you, Michael. He  
Came when I felt you changed from what I  
thought you.  
Even now it is not love, but jealousy that  
brought you."

"That is untrue," he said. "I am in hell.  
You are my heart's beloved, Mary, you.  
By God, I know your beauty now too well.  
We are each other's, flesh and soul, we two."  
"That was sweet knowledge once," she said;  
"we knew  
That truth of old. Now, in a strange man's  
bed,  
I read it in my soul, and find it written red."

"Is he a brute?" he asked. "No," she replied.  
"I did not understand what it would mean.  
And now that you are back, would I had died;  
Died, and the misery of it not have been.  
Lion would not be wrecked, nor I unclean.

I was a proud one once, and now I'm tame;  
Oh, Michael, say some word to take away my  
shame."

She sobbed; his arms went round her; the  
night heard  
Intense fierce whispering passing, soul to  
soul,  
Love running hot on many a murmured word,  
Love's passionate giving into new control.  
Their present misery did but blow the coal,  
Did but entangle deeper their two wills,  
While the brown brook ran on by buried  
daffodils.

#### THE END OF THE TROUBLE

Lion lay still while the cold tides of death  
Came brimming up his channels. With one  
hand  
He groped to know if Michael still drew  
breath.  
His little hour was running out its sand.  
Then, in a mist, he saw his Mary stand  
Above. He cried aloud, "He was my brother.  
I was his comrade sworn, and we have killed  
each other.

"Oh desolate grief, beloved, and through me.  
We wise who try to change. Oh, you wild  
birds,

Help my unhappy spirit to the sea.  
The golden bowl is scattered into shreds."  
And Mary knelt and murmured passionate  
words  
To that poor body on the dabbled flowers:  
"Oh, beauty, oh, sweet soul. oh, little love  
of ours—

"Michael, my own heart's darling, speak; it's  
me,  
Mary. You know my voice. I'm here, dear,  
here.  
Oh, little golden-haired one, listen. See,  
It's Mary, Michael. Speak to Mary, dear.  
Oh, Michael, little love, he cannot hear;  
And you have killed him, Lion; he is dead.  
My little friend, my love, my Michael, golden  
head.

"We had such fun together, such sweet fun,  
My love and I, my merry love and I.  
Oh, love, you shone upon me like the sun.  
Oh, Michael, say some little last good-bye."  
Then in a calm voice Lion called, "I die.  
Go home and tell my people. Mary. Hear.  
Though I have wrought this ruin, I have  
loved you, dear.

"Better than he; not better, dear, as well.  
If you could kiss me, dearest, at this last.

We have made bloody doorways from our  
hell,  
Cutting our tangle. Now, the murder past,  
We are but pitiful poor souls; and fast  
The darkness and the cold come. Kiss me,  
sweet;  
I loved you all my life; but some lives never  
meet

"Though they go wandering side by side  
through Time.

Kiss me," he cried. She bent, she kissed his  
brow.

"Oh, friend," she said, "you're lying in the  
slime."

"Three blind ones, dear," he murmured, "in  
the slough,

Caught fast for death; but never mind that  
now;

Go home and tell my people. I am dying,  
Dying dear, dying now." He died; she left  
him lying,

And kissed her dead one's head and crossed  
the field.

"They have been killed," she called, in a great  
crying.

"Killed, and our spirits' eyes are all unsealed,  
The blood is scattered on the flowers drying."

It was the hush of dusk, and owls were  
flying;  
They hooted as the Occleves ran to bring  
That sorry harvest home from Death's red  
harvesting.

They laid the bodies on the bed together.  
And "You were beautiful," she said, "and you  
Were my own darling in the April weather.  
You knew my very soul, you knew, you knew.  
Oh, my sweet, piteous love, I was not true.  
Fetch me fair water and the flowers of  
spring;  
My love is dead, and I must deck his bury-  
ing."

They left her with her dead; they could not  
choose  
But grant the spirit burning in her face  
Rights that their pity urged them to refuse.  
They did her sorrow and the dead a grace.  
All night they heard her passing footsteps  
trace  
About the flooring in the room of death.  
They heard her singing there, lowly, with  
gentle breath,

Yet when the darkness passed they tried the  
door,  
And burst it, fearing; there the singer lay

Drooped at her lover's bedside on the floor,  
Singing her passionate last of life away.  
White flowers had fallen from a blackthorn  
    spray  
Over her loosened hair. Pale flowers of  
    spring  
Filled the white room of death; they covered  
    everything.

Primroses, daffodils, and cuckoo-flowers.  
She bowed her singing head on Michael's  
    breast.

"Oh, it was sweet," she cried, "that love of  
    ours.

You were the dearest, sweet; I loved you best.  
Beloved, my beloved, let me rest  
By you forever, little Michael mine.  
Now the great hour is stricken, and the bread  
    and wine

"Broken and spilt; and now the homing birds  
Draw to a covert, Michael; I to you.  
Bury us two together," came her words.  
The dropping petals fell about the two.  
Her heart had broken; she was dead. They  
    drew

Her gentle head aside; they found it pressed  
Against the brodered 'kerchief spread on  
    Michael's breast,

The one that bore her name in Michael's hair,  
Given so long before. They let her lie  
While the dim moon died out upon the air,  
And happy sunlight coloured all the sky.  
The lack cock crowed for morning; carts  
went by;  
Smoke rose from cottage chimneys; from the  
byre  
The yokes went clanking by, to dairy,  
through the mire.

In the day's noise the water's noise was  
stilled,  
But still it slipped along, the cold hill-spring,  
Dropping from leafy hollows, which it filled,  
On to the pebbly shelves which made it sing;  
Glints glittered on it from the 'fisher's wing;  
It saw the moorhen nesting; then it stayed  
In a great space of reeds where merry otters  
played.

Slowly it loitered past the shivering reeds  
Into a mightier water; thence its course  
Becomes a pasture where the salmon feeds,  
Wherein no bubble tells its humble source;  
But the great waves go rolling, and the horse  
Snorts at the bursting waves and will not  
drink,  
And the great ships go outward, bubbling to  
the brink,

Outward, with men upon them, stretched in  
line,  
Handling the halliards to the ocean's gates,  
Where flicking windflaws fill the air with  
brine,  
And all the ocean opens. Then the mates  
Cry, and the sunburnt crew no longer waits,  
But sings triumphant and the topsail fills  
To this old tale of woe among the daffodils.

*Selections from*  
**PHILIP THE KING**

MESSENGER.

This gold chain . . .  
Bears the twelve badges of the strength of  
Spain

Once linked in glory, Philip, but now loosed.

*(Detaching link from link.)*

Castilla, Leon, Aragon, and these,  
Palestine, Portugal, the Sicilies,  
Navarre, Granada, the Valencian State,  
The Indies, East and West, the Archducate,  
The Western Mainland in the Ocean Sea.  
Those who upheld their strength have ceased  
to be.

I, who am dying, King, have seen their graves.  
Philip, your Navy is beneath the waves.



PHILIP.

He who in bounty gives in wisdom takes.

MESSENGER.

O King, forgive me for my spirit breaks;  
I saw those beaches where the Grange  
descends  
White with unburied corpses of stripped  
friends.

PHILIP.

I grieve that Spain's disaster brings such loss.

MESSENGER.

From Pentland to the Groyne the tempests  
toss  
Unshriven Spaniards driving with the tide.  
They were my lovely friends and they have  
died,  
Far from wind-broken Biscay, far from home,  
With no anointing chrism but the foam.

PHILIP.

The dead will rise from unsuspected slime;  
God's chosen will be gathered in God's time.

MESSENGER.

King, they died helpless; our unwieldy fleet  
Made such a target to the English guns  
That we were riddled through like sifted  
wheat.

We never came to grappling with them once.  
They raked us from a distance, and then ran.  
Each village throughout Spain has lost a man;  
The widows in the seaports fill the streets.

PHILIP.

Uncertain chance decides the fate of fleets.

MESSENGER.

Now the North Sea is haunted for all time  
By miserable souls whose dying words  
Cursed the too proud adventure as a crime.  
Our broken galleons house the gannet-birds.  
The Irish burn our Captain's bones for lime.  
O misery that the might of England wrought!

PHILIP.

Christ is the only remedy for thought  
When the mind sickens. We are pieces  
    played,  
Not moving as we will, but as we are made;  
Beaten and spurred at times like stubborn  
    steeds,  
That we may go God's way. Your spirit  
    bleeds,  
Having been proved in trouble past her  
    strength.  
Give me the roll in all its ghastly length.  
Which of my friends survive, if any live?

MESSENGER.

Some have survived, but all are fugitive.  
Your Admiral in command is living still;  
Michael Oquendo too, thought he is ill,  
Dying of broken heart and bitter shame.  
Valdes is prisoner, Manrique the same.

PHILIP.

God willed the matter; they are not to blame.  
Thank God that they are living. Name the  
rest.

MESSENGER.

They are all dead . . . with him you loved  
the best.

PHILIP.

I dreamed De Leyva died, so it is true?

MESSENGER.

Drowned on the Irish coast with all his crew.  
After enduring dying many days  
The sea has given him quiet. Many ways  
Lead men to death, and he a hard one trod,  
Bearing much misery, like a knight of God.

PHILIP.

Amen. Go on.

MESSENGER.

Hugh de Moncada died,  
Shot in his burning ship by Calais side,

Cheering his men to save her. Pimentel  
Sank in a galleon shambled like a hell  
Rather than yield, and in a whirl of flames  
Pedro Mendoza, Captain of St. James,  
Stood with Don Philip thrusting boarders  
back

Till their Toledan armour was burnt black,  
And both their helms ran blood. And there  
they fell,  
Shot down to bleed to death. They perished  
well,

Happy to die in battle for their King  
Before defeat had fallen on their friends;  
Happier than most, for where the merrows  
sing

Paredes and his brother met their ends,  
And Don Alarcon, cast alive ashore,  
Was killed and stripped and hanged upon a  
tree.

And young Mendoza, whom the flagship bore,  
Died of starvation and of misery.  
But hundreds perished, King; why mention  
these?

Battle and hunger, heart-break, and the seas  
Have overwhelmed the chivalry of Spain.

PHILIP.

Misfortune, after effort, brings no stain.  
Perhaps I underjudged the English fleet.

How was it that the Spaniards met defeat?  
What evil fortune brought about our fall?

MESSENGER.

Their sailors and their cannon did it all.

PHILIP.

Yet when the fleet reached Calais all went  
well.

MESSENGER.

Our woes began there.

PHILIP.

Tell me what befell.

MESSENGER.

We were to ship the troops in Calais Road;  
They lay encamped, prepared to go aboard.  
To windward still the English fleet abode—  
Still as in port when peace has been restored.

The wind and sea were fair,  
We lay at anchor there;  
The stars burned in the air,  
The men were sleeping,  
When in the midnight dark  
Our watchman saw a spark  
Suddenly light a bark  
With long flames leaping.

Then, as they stood amazed,  
Others and other blazed;  
Then terror set them crazed,  
They ran down screaming:  
"Fire-ships are coming! Wake!  
Cast loose, for Jesus' sake!  
Eight fire-ships come from Drake—  
Look at their gleaming!"

Roused in the dark from bed,  
We saw the fire show red,  
And instant panic spread  
Through troops and sailors;  
They swarmed on deck unclad,  
They did what terror bade,  
King, they were like the mad  
Escaped from jailers.

Some prayed for mercy, some  
Rang bells or beat the drum,  
As though despair had come  
At hell's contriving;  
Captains with terror pale  
Screamed through the dark their hail,  
"Cut cable, loose the sail,  
And set all driving!"

Heading all ways at once,  
Grinding each other's guns,  
Our blundering galleons

Athwart-hawse galleys,  
Timbers and plankings cleft,  
And half our tackling reft,  
Your grand Armada left  
The roads of Calais.

Weary and overwrought  
We strove to make all taut;  
But when the morning brought  
The dawn to light us,  
Drake, with the weather gage,  
Made signal to engage,  
And, like a pard in rage,  
Bore down to fight us.

Nobly the English line  
Trampled the bubbled brine,  
We heard the gun-trucks whine  
To the taut laniard.  
Onwards we saw them forge,  
White-billowing at the gorge.  
"On, on!" they cried, "St. George!  
Down with the Spaniard!"

From their van squadron broke  
A withering battle-stroke,  
Tearing our planked oak  
By straiks asunder,  
Blasting the wood like rot  
With such a hail of shot,

So constant and so hot  
It beat us under.

The English would not close;  
They fought us as they chose,  
Dealing us deadly blows  
For seven hours.  
Lords of our chiefest rank  
The bitter billow drank,  
For there the English sank  
Three ships of ours.

\* \* \* \*

Then the wind forced us northward from the  
fight;  
We could not ship the army nor return;  
We held the sea in trouble through the night,  
Watching the English signals blink and burn.  
The English in a dim cloud kept astern;  
All night they signalled, while our shattered  
ships  
Huddled like beasts beneath the drovers'  
whips.

\* \* \* \*

At dawn the same wind held; we could not  
strive.  
The English drove us north as herdsmen  
drive.

\* \* \* \*



Under our tattered flags,  
With rigging cut to rags,  
Our ships like stricken stags  
Were heaped and hounded.  
Caught by the unknown tide,  
With neither chart nor guide,  
We fouled the Holland side,  
Where four more grounded.

Our water-casks were burst,  
The horses died of thirst,  
The wounded raved and curst,  
Uncared, untended.  
All night we heard the crying  
Of lonely shipmates dying;  
We had to leave them lying.  
So the fight ended.

PHILIP.

God gives His victory as He wills. But this  
Was not complete destruction. What thing  
worse  
Came to destroy you?

MESSENGER.

An avenging curse,  
Due for old sins, destroyed us.

PHILIP.

Tell the tale.

MESSENGER.

O King, when morning dawned it blew a gale,  
But still the English followed, and we fled  
Till breakers made the dirty waters pale.  
We saw the Zeeland sandbanks right ahead,  
Blind in a whirling spray that gave us dread;  
For we were blown there, and the water  
shoaled.

The crying of the leadsmen at the lead,  
Calling the soundings, were our death-bells  
toll'd.

We drifted down to death upon the sands;  
The English drew away to watch us drown;  
We saw the bitter breakers with grey hands  
Tear the dead body of the sandbank brown.  
We could do nothing, so we drifted down  
Singing the psalms for death; we who had  
been

Lords of the sea and knights of great renown,  
Doomed to be strangled by a death unclean.

PHILIP.

So there the ships were wrecked?

MESSENGER.

Time had not struck.  
O King, we learned how blessed mercy saves:  
Even as our forefoot grounded on the muck,

Tripping us up to drown us in the waves,  
A sudden windshift snatched us from our  
    graves

And drove us north; and now another woe,  
Tempest unending, beat our ships to staves—  
A never-dying gale with frost and snow.

Now our hearts failed, for food and water  
    failed;  
The men fell sick by troops, the wounded  
    died.

They washed about the wet decks as we sailed  
For want of strength to lift them overside.  
Desolate seas we sailed, so grim, so wide,  
That ship by ship our comrades disappeared.  
With neither sun nor star to be a guide,  
Like spirits of the wretched dead we steered.  
Till, having beaten through the Pentland  
    Pass,

*We saw the Irish surf, with mists of spray*  
Blowing far inland, blasting trees and grass,  
And gave God thanks, for we espied a bay  
Safe, with bright water running down the  
    clay—

A running brook where we could drink and  
    drink.

But drawing near, our ships were cast away,  
Bilged on the rocks; we saw our comrades  
    sink . . .

Or worse: for those the breakers cast ashore  
The Irish killed and stripped; their bodies  
white

Lay naked to the wolves—yea, sixty score—  
All down the windy beach, a piteous sight.  
The savage Irish watched by bonfire light  
Lest more should come ashore; we heard them  
there

Screaming the bloody news of their delight.  
Then we abandoned hope and new despair.

And now the fleet is sunken in the sea,  
And all the seamen, all the might of Spain,  
Are dead, O King, and out of misery,  
Never to drag at frozen ropes again.  
Never to know defeat, nor feel the pain  
Of watching dear companions sink and die.  
Death's everlasting armistice to the brain  
Gives their poor griefs quietus; let them lie.

I, like a ghost returning from the grave,  
Come from a stricken ship to tell the news  
Of Spanish honour which we could not  
save,

Nor win again, nor even die to lose;  
And since God's hidden wisdom loves to  
bruise

Those whom He loves, we, trembling in  
despair,

Will watch our griefs to see God's finger  
there,

And make His will our solace and excuse.

Defeat is bitter and the truth is hard—  
Spain is defeated, England has prevailed;  
This is the banner which I could not guard,  
And this the consecrated sword which failed.  
Do with your dying Captain as you will.

*(He lays down sword and banner.)*

PHILIP.

I, from my heart, thank God, from whose  
great hand

I am so helped with power, I can still  
Set out another fleet against that land.

Nor do I think it ill

If all the running water takes its course  
While there are unspent fountains at the  
source.

He sendeth out His word and melteth them.  
Take back your standard, Captain. As you go,  
Bid the bells toll and let the clergy come.  
Then in the city by the strike of drum  
Proclaim a general fast. In bitter days  
The soul finds God, God us.

*(Exit CAPTAIN.)*

PHILIP *(Alone)*.

De Leyva, friend,  
Whom I shall never see, never again,

This misery that I feel is over Spain.  
O God, beloved God, in pity send  
That blessed rose among the thorns, an end:  
Give a bruised spirit peace.

*(He kneels. A muffled march of the  
drums.)*

CURTAIN.

## TRUTH

Man with his burning soul  
Has but an hour of breath  
To build a ship of truth  
In which his soul may sail.  
Sail on the sea of death,  
For death takes toll  
Of beauty, courage, youth,  
Of all but truth.

Life's city ways are dark,  
Men mutter by; the wells  
Of the great waters moan.  
O death! O sea! O tide!  
The waters moan like bells;  
No light, no mark,  
The soul goes out alone  
On seas unknown.

Stripped of all purple robes,  
Stripped of all golden lies,

I will not be afraid,  
Truth will preserve through death.  
Perhaps the stars will rise,  
The stars like globes;  
The ship my striving made  
May see night fade.

### THE "WANDERER"

All day they loitered by the resting ships,  
Telling their beauties over, taking stock;  
At night the verdict left my messmates' lips,  
"The *Wanderer* is the finest ship in dock."

I had not seen her, but a friend, since  
drowned,  
Drew her, with painted ports, low, lovely,  
lean,  
Saying, "The *Wanderer*, clipper, outward  
bound,  
The loveliest ship my eyes have ever seen—

"Perhaps to-morrow you will see her sail.  
She sails at sunrise": but the morrow showed  
No *Wanderer* setting forth for me to hail;  
Far down the stream men pointed where she  
rode,

Rode the great trackway to the sea, dim, dim,  
Already gone before the stars were gone.

I saw her at the sea-line's smoky rim  
Grow swiftly vaguer as they towed her on.

Soon even her masts were hidden in the haze  
Beyond the city; she was on her course  
To trample billows for a hundred days;  
That afternoon the norther gathered force,

Blowing a small snow from a point of east.  
"Oh, fair for her," we said, "to take her  
south."

And in our spirits, as the wind increased,  
We saw her there, beyond the river mouth,

Setting her side-lights in the wildering dark,  
To glint upon mad water, while the gale  
Roared like a battle, snapping like a shark,  
And drunken seamen struggled with the sail.

While with sick hearts her mates put out of  
mind  
Their little children left astern, ashore,  
And the gale's gathering made the darkness  
blind,  
Water and air one intermingled roar.

Then we forgot her, for the fiddlers played,  
Dancing and singing held our merry crew;  
The old ship moaned a little as she swayed.  
It blew all night, oh, bitter hard it blew!



So that at midnight I was called on deck  
To keep an anchor-watch: I heard the sea  
Roar past in white procession filled with  
wreck;

Intense bright frosty stars burned over me,  
And the Greek brig beside us dipped and  
dipped,  
White to the muzzle like a half-tide rock,  
Drowned to the mainmast with the seas she  
shipped;

Her cable-swivels clanged at every shock.

And like a never-dying force, the wind  
Roared till we shouted with it, roared until  
Its vast vitality of wrath was thinned,  
Had beat its fury breathless and was still.

By dawn the gale had dwindled into flaw,  
A glorious morning followed: with my friend  
I climbed the fo'c's'le-head to see; we saw  
The waters hurrying shorewards without end.

Haze blotted out the river's lowest reach;  
Out of the gloom the steamers, passing by,  
Called with their sirens, hooting their sea-  
speech;

Out of the dimness others made reply.

And as we watched, there came a rush of feet  
Charging the fo'c's'le till the hatchway shook.

Men all about us thrust their way, or beat,  
Crying, "The *Wanderer!* Down the river!  
Look!"

I looked with them towards the dimness;  
there

Gleamed like a spirit striding out of night,  
A full-rigged ship unutterably fair,  
Her masts like trees in winter, frosty-bright.

Foam trembled at her bows like wisps of  
wool;

She trembled as she towed. I had not dreamed  
That work of man could be so beautiful,  
In its own presence and in what it seemed.

"So, she is putting back again," I said.

"How white with frost her yards are on the  
fore."

One of the men about me answer made,  
"That is not frost, but all her sails are tore,

"Torn into tatters, youngster, in the gale;  
Her best foul-weather suit gone." It was  
true,

Her masts were white with rags of tattered  
sail

Many as gannets when the fish are due.

Beauty in desolation was her pride,  
Her crowned array a glory that had been;

She faltered tow'rds us like a swan that died,  
But although ruined she was still a queen.

"Put back with all her sails gone," went the  
word;

Then, from her signals flying, rumor ran,  
"The sea that stove her boats in killed her  
third;

She has been gutted and has lost a man."

So, as though stepping to a funeral march,  
She passed defeated homewards whence she  
came,

Ragged with tattered canvas white as starch,  
A wild bird that misfortune had made tame.

She was refitted soon: another took  
The dead man's office; then the singers hove  
Her capstan till the snapping hawsers shook;  
Out, with a bubble at her bows, she drove.

Again they towed her seawards, and again  
We, watching, praised her beauty, praised her  
trim,

Saw her fair house-flag flutter at the main,  
And slowly saunter seawards, dwindling dim;

And wished her well, and wondered, as she  
died,

How, when her canvas had been sheeted home,

Her quivering length would sweep into her  
stride,

Making the greenness milky with her foam.

But when we rose next morning, we discerned  
Her beauty once again a shattered thing;  
Towing to dock the *Wanderer* returned,  
A wounded sea-bird with a broken wing.

A spar was gone, her rigging's disarray  
Told of a worse disaster than the last;  
Like dragged hair dishevelled hung the stay,  
Drooping and beating on the broken mast.

Half-mast upon her flagstaff hung her flag;  
Word went among us how the broken spar  
Had gored her captain like an angry stag,  
And killed her mate a half-day from the bar.

She passed to dock upon the top of flood.  
An old man near me shook his head and  
swore:

"Like a bad woman, she has tasted blood—  
There'll be no trusting in her any more."

We thought it truth, and when we saw her  
there

Lying in dock, beyond, across the stream,  
We would forget that we had called her fair,  
We thought her murderess and the past a  
dream.

And when she sailed again, we watched in  
awe,  
Wondering what bloody act her beauty  
planned,  
What evil lurked behind the thing we saw,  
What strength was there that thus annulled  
man's hand,

How next its triumph would compel man's  
will  
Into compliance with external Fate,  
How next the powers would use her to work  
ill  
On suffering men; we had not long to wait.

For soon the outcry of derision rose,  
"Here comes the *Wanderer!*" the expected  
cry.  
Guessing the cause, our mocking joined with  
those  
Yelled from the shipping as they towed  
her by.

She passed us close, her seamen paid no heed  
To what was called: they stood, a sullen  
group,  
Smoking and spitting, careless of her need,  
Mocking the orders given from the poop.

Her mates and boys were working her; we  
stared.

What was the reason of this strange return,  
This third annulling of the thing prepared?  
No outward evil could our eyes discern.

Only like someone who has formed a plan  
Beyond the pitch of common minds, she  
sailed,

Mocked and deserted by the common man,  
Made half divine to me for having failed.

We learned the reason soon; below the town  
A stay had parted like a snapping reed,  
"Warning," the men thought, "not to take her  
down."

They took the omen, they would not proceed.

Days passed before another crew would sign.  
The *Wanderer* lay in dock alone, unmanned,  
Feared as a thing possessed by powers malign,  
Bound under curses not to leave the land.

But under passing Time fear passes too;  
That terror passed, the sailors' hearts grew  
bold.

We learned in time that she had found a crew  
And was bound out and southwards as of old.

And in contempt we thought, "A little while  
Will bring her back again, dismantled,  
spoiled.

It is herself; she cannot change her style;  
She has the habit now of being foiled."

So when a ship appeared among the haze,  
We thought, "The *Wanderer* back again";  
but no,

No *Wanderer* showed for many, many days,  
Her passing lights made other waters glow.

But we would often think and talk of her,  
Tell newer hands her story, wondering, then,  
Upon what ocean she was *Wanderer*,  
Bound to the cities built by foreign men.

And one by one our little conclave thinned,  
Passed into ships and sailed and so away,  
To drown in some great roaring of the wind,  
*Wanderers* themselves, unhappy fortune's  
prey.

And Time went by me making memory dim,  
Yet still I wondered if the *Wanderer* fared  
Still pointing to the unreach'd ocean's rim,  
Brightening the water where her breast was  
bared.

And much in ports abroad I eyed the ships,  
Hoping to see her well-remembered form

Come with a curl of bubbles at her lips  
Bright to her berth, the sovereign of the  
storm.

I never did, and many years went by,  
Then, near a Southern port, one Christmas  
Eve,  
I watched a gale go roaring through the sky,  
Making the caldrons of the clouds upheave.

Then the wrack tattered and the stars  
appeared,  
Millions of stars that seemed to speak in fire;  
A byre cock cried aloud that morning neared,  
The swinging wind-vane flashed upon the  
spire.

And soon men looked upon a glittering earth,  
Intensely sparkling like a world new-born;  
Only to look was spiritual birth,  
So bright the raindrops ran along the thorn.

So bright they were, that one could almost  
pass  
Beyond their twinkling to the source, and  
know  
The glory pushing in the blade of grass,  
That hidden soul which makes the flowers  
grow.



That soul was there apparent, not revealed,  
Unearthly meanings covered every tree,  
That wet grass grew in an immortal field,  
Those waters fed some never-wrinkled sea.

The scarlet berries in the hedge stood out  
Like revelations but the tongue unknown;  
Even in the brooks a joy was quick: the trout  
Rushed in a dumbness dumb to me alone.

All of the valley was aloud with brooks;  
I walked the morning, breasting up the fells,  
Taking again lost childhood from the rooks,  
Whose cawing came above the Christmas  
bells.

I had not walked that glittering world before,  
But up the hill a prompting came to me,  
"This line of upland runs along the shore:  
Beyond the hedgerow I shall see the sea."

And on the instant from beyond away  
That long familiar sound, a ship's bell, broke  
The hush below me in the unseen bay.  
Old memories came: that inner prompting  
spoke.

And bright above the hedge a seagull's wings  
Flashed and were steady upon empty air.

"A Power unseen," I cried, "prepares these things;

"Those are her bells, the *Wanderer* is there."

So, hurrying to the hedge and looking down,  
I saw a mighty bay's wind-crinkled blue  
Ruffling the image of a tranquil town,  
With lapsing waters glittering as they grew.

And near me in the road the shipping swung,  
So stately and so still in such great peace  
That like to drooping crests their colours  
hung,

Only their shadows trembled without cease.

I did but glance upon those anchored ships.  
Even as my thought had told, I saw her plain;  
Tense, like a supple athlete with lean hips,  
Swiftness at pause, the *Wanderer* come  
again—

Come as of old a queen, untouched by Time,  
Resting the beauty that no seas could tire,  
Sparkling as though the midnight's rain were  
rime,

Like a man's thoughts transfigured into fire.

And as I looked, one of her men began  
To sing some simple tune of Christmas Day;  
Among her crew the song spread, man to man,  
Until the singing rang across the bay;

And soon in other anchored ships the men  
Joined in the singing with clear throats, until  
The farm-boy heard it up the windy glen,  
Above the noise of sheep-bells on the hill.

Over the water came the lifted song—  
Blind pieces in a mighty game we swing;  
Life's battle is a conquest for the strong;  
The meaning shows in the defeated thing.

#### AUGUST, 1914

How still this quiet cornfield is to-night!  
By an intenser glow the evening falls,  
Bringing, not darkness, but a deeper light;  
Among the stooks a partridge covey calls.

The windows glitter on the distant hill;  
Beyond the hedge the sheep-bells in the fold  
Stumble on sudden music and are still;  
The forlorn pinewoods droop above the wold.

An endless quiet valley reaches out  
Past the blue hills into the evening sky;  
Over the stubble, cawing, goes a rout  
Of rooks from harvest, flagging as they fly.

So beautiful it is, I never saw  
So great a beauty on these English fields,

Touched by the twilight's coming into awe,  
Ripe to the soul and rich with summer's  
    yields.

\*                  \*                  \*                  \*

These homes, this valley spread below me  
    here,  
The rooks, the tilted stacks, the beasts in pen,  
Have been the heartfelt things, past-speaking  
    dear  
To unknown generations of dead men,

Who, century after century, held these farms,  
And, looking out to watch the changing sky,  
Heard, as we hear, the rumours and alarms  
Of war at hand and danger pressing nigh,

And knew, as we know, that the message  
    meant  
The breaking off of ties, the loss of friends,  
Death, like a miser getting in his rent,  
And no new stones laid where the trackway  
    ends,

The harvest not yet won, the empty bin,  
The friendly horses taken from the stalls,  
The fallow on the hill not yet brought in,  
The cracks unplastered in the leaking walls,

Yet heard the news, and went discouraged  
home,

And brooded by the fire with heavy mind,  
With such dumb loving of the Berkshire loam  
As breaks the dumb hearts of the English  
kind;

Then sadly rose and left the well-loved  
Downs,

And so by ship to sea, and knew no more  
The fields of home, the byres, the market  
towns,

Nor the dear outline of the English shore,

But knew the misery of the soaking trench,  
The freezing in the rigging, the despair  
In the revolting second of the wrench  
When the blind soul is flung upon the air,

And died (uncouthly, most) in foreign lands  
For some idea but dimly understood  
Of an English city never built by hands  
Which love of England prompted and made  
good.

\* \* \* \*

If there be any life beyond the grave,  
It must be near the men and things we love,  
Some power of quick suggestion how to save,  
Touching the living soul as from above,

An influence from the Earth from those dead  
    hearts

So passionate once, so deep, so truly kind,  
That in the living child the spirit starts,  
Feeling companioned still, not left behind.

Surely above these fields a spirit broods,  
A sense of many watchers muttering near,  
Of the lone Downland with the forlorn woods  
Loved to the death, inestimably dear,

A muttering from beyond the veils of Death  
From long-dead men, to whom this quiet  
    scene

Came among blinding tears with the last  
    breath,  
The dying soldier's vision of his queen.

All the unspoken worship of those lives  
Spent in forgotten wars at other calls  
Glimmers upon these fields where evening  
    drives  
Beauty like breath, so gently darkness falls,

Darkness that makes the meadows holier still.  
The elm-trees sadden in the hedge, a sigh  
Moves in the beech-clump on the haunted hill,  
The rising planets deepen in the sky,

And silence broods like spirit on the brae,  
A glimmering moon begins, the moonlight  
    runs  
Over the grasses of the ancient way  
Ruttet this morning by the passing guns.

## BIOGRAPHY

When I am buried, all my thoughts and acts  
Will be reduced to lists of dates and facts,  
And long before this wandering flesh is rotten  
The dates which made me will be all  
    forgotten;  
And none will know the gleam there used  
    to be  
About the feast-days freshly kept by me,  
But men will call the golden hour of bliss  
"About this time," or "shortly after this."

Men do not heed the rungs by which men  
    climb  
Those glittering steps, those milestones upon  
    Time,  
Those tombstones of dead selves, those hours  
    of birth,  
Those moments of the soul in years of earth.  
They mark the height achieved, the main  
    result,

The power of freedom in the perished cult,  
The power of boredom in the dead man's  
    deeds,  
Not the bright moments of the sprinkled  
    seeds.

By many waters and on many ways  
I have known golden instants and bright  
    days;  
The day on which, beneath an arching sail,  
I saw the Cordilleras and gave hail;  
The summer day on which in heart's delight  
I saw the Swansea Mumbles bursting white;  
The glittering day when all the waves wore  
    flags,  
And the ship *Wanderer* came with sails in  
    rags;  
That curlew-calling time in Irish dusk,  
When life became more splendid than its  
    husk,  
When the rent chapel on the brae at Slains  
Shone with a doorway opening beyond brains;  
The dawn when, with a brace-block's creaking  
    cry,  
Out of the mist a little barque slipped by,  
Spilling the mist with changing gleams of  
    red,  
Then gone, with one raised hand and one  
    turned head;



The howling evening when the spindrift's  
mists  
Broke to display the Four Evangelists,  
Snow-capped, divinely granite, lashed by  
breakers,  
Wind-beaten bones of long since buried  
acres;  
The night alone near water where I heard  
All the sea's spirit spoken by a bird;  
The English dusk when I beheld once more  
(With eyes so changed) the ship, the citted  
shore,  
The lines of masts, the streets so cheerly trod  
(In happier seasons), and gave thanks to God.  
All had their beauty, their bright moments'  
gift,  
Their something caught from Time, the ever-  
swift.

All of those gleams were golden; but life's  
hands  
Have given more constant gifts in changing  
lands,  
And when I count those gifts, I think them  
such  
As no man's bounty could have bettered  
much:  
The gift of country life, near hills and woods,  
Where happy waters sing in solitudes;

The gift of being near ships, of seeing each  
day  
A city of ships with great ships under weigh;  
The great street paved with water, filled with  
shipping,  
And all the world's flags flying and seagulls  
dipping.

Yet when I am dust my penman may not  
know  
Those water-trampling ships which made me  
glow,  
But think my wonder mad and fail to find  
Their glory, even dimly, from my mind,  
And yet they made me. Not alone the  
ships,  
But men hard-palmed from tallying-on to  
whips,  
The two close friends of nearly twenty years,  
Sea-followers both, sea-wrestlers and sea-  
peers,  
Whose feet with mine wore many a bolthead  
bright  
Treading the decks beneath the riding light.  
Yet death will make that warmth of friend-  
ship cold,  
And who'll know what one said and what one  
told  
Our hearts' communion and the broken spells

When the loud call blew at the strike of  
bells?

No one, I know, yet let me be believed,  
A soul entirely known is life achieved.

Years blank with hardship never speak a  
word,

Live in the soul to make the being stirred;  
Towns can be prisons, where the spirit dulls  
Away from mates and ocean-wandering hulls,  
Away from all bright water and great hills  
And sheep-walks, where the curlews cry their  
fills;

Away in towns, where eyes have nought to see  
But dead museums and miles of misery,  
And floating life unrooted from man's need,  
And miles of fish-hooks baited to catch greed,  
And life made wretched out of human ken,  
And miles of shopping women served by men.  
So, if the penman sums my London days,  
Let him but say that there were holy ways,  
Dull Bloomsbury streets of dull brick man-  
sions old,

With stinking doors, where women stood to  
scold,

And drunken waits at Christmas with their  
horn,

Droning the news, in snow, that Christ was  
born;

And windy gas-lamps and the wet roads  
    shining,  
And that old carol of the midnight whining,  
And that old room (above the noisy slum),  
Where there was wine and fire and talk with  
    some  
Under strange pictures of the wakened soul,  
To whom this earth was but a burnt-out coal.

O Time, bring back those midnights and those  
    friends,  
Those glittering moments that a spirit lends,  
That all may be imagined from the flash,  
The cloud-hid god-game through the light-  
    ning gash,  
Those hours of stricken sparks from which  
    men took  
Light to send out to men in song or book.  
Those friends who heard St. Pancras's bells  
    strike two  
Yet stayed until the barber's cockerel crew,  
Talking of noble styles, the Frenchman's best,  
The thought beyond great poets not ex-  
    pressed,  
The glory of mood where human frailty  
    failed,  
The forts of human light not yet assailed,  
Till the dim room had mind, and seemed to  
    brood,

Binding our wills to mental brotherhood,  
Till we became a college, and each night  
Was discipline and manhood and delight,  
Till our farewells, and winding down the  
stairs  
At each grey dawn had meaning that Time  
spares,  
That we, so linked, should roam the whole  
world round  
Teaching the ways our brooding minds had  
found,  
Making that room our Chapter, our one mind,  
Where all that this world soiled should be  
refined.

Often at night I tread those streets again,  
And see the alley glimmering in the rain;  
Yet now I miss that sign of earlier tramps,  
A house with shadows of plane-boughs under  
lamps,  
The secret house where once a beggar stood  
Trembling and blind to show his woe for  
food.  
And now I miss that friend who used to walk  
Home to my lodgings with me, deep in talk,  
Wearing the last of night out in still streets  
Trodden by us and policemen on their beats  
And cats, but else deserted. Now I miss  
That lively mind and guttural laugh of his,

And that strange way he had of making  
gleam,  
Like something real, the art we used to dream.  
London has been my prison; but my books,  
Hills and great waters, labouring men and  
brooks,  
Ships and deep friendships, and remembered  
days,  
Which even now set all my mind ablaze,  
As that June day when, in the red bricks'  
chinks,  
I saw the old Roman ruins white with pinks,  
And felt the hillside haunted even then  
By not dead memory of the Roman men.  
And felt the hillside thronged by souls  
unseen,  
Who knew the interest in me, and were keen  
That man alive should understand man dead,  
So many centuries since the blood was shed.  
And quickened with strange hush because  
this comer  
Felt a strange soul alive behind the summer.

That other day on Ercall when the stones  
Were sunbleached white, like long unburied  
bones,  
While the bees droned and all the air was  
sweet  
From honey buried underneath my feet.

Honey of purple heather and white clover  
Sealed in its gummy bags till summer's over.  
Then other days by water, by bright sea,  
Clear as clean glass and my bright friend  
with me,

The cove clean bottomed where we saw the  
brown

Red spotted plaice go skimming six feet down  
And saw the long fronds waving, white with  
shells,

Waving, unfolding, drooping, to the swells;  
That sadder day when we beheld the great  
And terrible beauty of a Lammas spate  
Roaring white-mouthed in all the great cliff's  
gaps

Headlong, tree-tumbling fury of collapse,  
While drenching clouds drove by and every  
sense

Was water roaring or rushing or in offence  
And mountain sheep stood huddled and blown  
gaps gleamed

Where torn white hair of torrents shook and  
streamed.

That sadder day when we beheld again  
A spate going down in sunshine after rain,  
When the blue reach of water leaping bright  
Was one long ripple and clatter, flecked with  
white,

And that far day, that never blotted page

When youth was bright like flowers about old  
age,  
Fair generations bringing thanks for life  
To that old kindly man and trembling wife  
After their sixty years: Time never made  
A better beauty since the Earth was laid,  
Than that thanksgiving given to grey hair  
For the great gift of life which brought them  
there.

Days of endeavour have been good: the days  
Racing in cutters for the comrade's praise,  
The day they led my cutter at the turn  
Yet could not keep the lead and dropped  
astern.  
The moment in the spurt when both boats,  
oars  
Dipped in each other's wash and throats grew  
hoarse  
And teeth ground into teeth and both strokes  
quickened  
Lashing the sea, and gasps came, and hearts  
sickened  
And coxwains damned us, dancing, banking  
stroke,  
To put our weights on, though our hearts  
were broke  
And both boats seemed to stick and sea  
seemed glue,



The tide a mill-race we were struggling  
through  
And every quick recover gave us squints  
Of them still there and oar-tossed water-  
glints,  
And cheering came, our friends, our foemen  
cheering,  
A long, wild, rallying murmur on the hearing  
"Port Fore!" and "Starboard Fore!" "Port  
Fore!" "Port Fore!"  
"Up with her, Starboard," and at that each oar  
Lightened, though arms were bursting, and  
eyes shut  
And the oak stretchers grunted in the strut,  
And the curse quickened from the cox, our  
bows  
Crashed, and drove talking water, we made  
vows,  
Chastity vows and temperance; in our pain  
We numbered things we'd never eat again  
If we could only win; then came the yell  
"Starboard," "Port Fore," and then a beaten  
bell  
Rung as for fire to cheer us. "Now." Oars  
bent  
Soul took the looms now body's bolt was  
spent,  
"Give way, come on now!" "On now!" "On  
now!" "Starboard."

"Port Fore!" "Up with her, Port!" each  
cutter harboured  
Ten eye-shut painsick strugglers, "Heave, oh,  
heave!"  
Catcalls waked echoes like a shrieking sheave.  
"Heave!" and I saw a back, then two. "Port  
Fore."  
"Starboard!" "Come on!" I saw the midship  
oar  
And knew we had done them. "Port Fore!"  
"Starboard!" "Now!"  
I saw bright water spurting at their bow  
Their cox' full face an instant. They were  
done.  
The watchers' cheering almost drowned the  
gun.  
We had hardly strength to toss our oars; our  
cry  
Cheering the losing cutter was a sigh.

Other bright days of action have seemed  
great:  
Wild days in a pampero off the Plate;  
Good swimming days, at Hog Back or the  
Coves  
Which the young gannet and the corbie  
loves;  
Surf-swimming between rollers, catching  
breath

Between the advancing grave and breaking  
death,  
Then shooting up into the sunbright smooth  
To watch the advancing roller bare her tooth,  
And days of labour also, loading, hauling;  
Long days at winch or capstan, heaving  
pawling;  
The days with oxen, dragging stone from  
blasting,  
And dusty days in mills, and hot days  
masting.  
Trucking on dust-dry deckings smooth as ice,  
And hunts in mighty wool-racks after mice;  
Mornings with buckwheat when the fields did  
blanch  
With White Leghorns come from the chicken  
ranch.  
Days near the spring upon the sunburnt hill,  
Plying the maul or gripping tight the drill.  
Delights of work most real, delights that  
change  
The headache life of towns to rapture strange  
Not known by townsmen, nor imagined;  
health  
That puts new glory upon mental wealth  
And makes the poor man rich. But that ends,  
too,  
Health with its thoughts of life; and that  
bright view,

That sunny landscape from life's peak, that  
glory,  
And all a glad man's comments on life's story,  
And thoughts of marvellous towns and living  
men,  
And what pens tell and all beyond the pen,  
End, and are summed in words so truly dead,  
They raise no image of the heart and head,  
The life, the man alive, the friend we knew,  
The mind ours argued with or listened to,  
None; but are dead, and all life's keenness, all,  
Is dead as print before the funeral,  
Even deader after, when the dates are sought,  
And cold minds disagree with what we  
thought.

This many-pictured world of many passions  
Wears out the nations as a woman fashions,  
And what life is is much to very few,  
Men being so strange, so mad, and what  
men do  
So good to watch or share; but when men  
count  
Those hours of life that were a bursting  
fount,  
Sparkling the dusty heart with living springs,  
There seems a world, beyond our earthly  
things,  
Gated by golden moments, each bright time

Opening to show the city white like lime,  
High-towered and many-peopled. This made  
sure,  
Work that obscures those moments seems  
impure,  
Making our not-returning time of breath  
Dull with the ritual and records of death,  
That frost of fact by which our wisdom gives  
Correctly stated death to all that lives.

Best trust the happy moments. What they  
gave  
Makes man less fearful of the certain grave,  
And gives his work compassion and new eyes,  
The days that make us happy make us wise.

## SHIPS

I cannot tell their wonder nor make known  
Magic that once thrilled through me to the  
bone,  
But all men praise some beauty, tell some tale,  
Vent a high mood which makes the rest seem  
pale,  
Pour their heart's blood to flourish one green  
leaf,  
Follow some Helen for her gift of grief,  
And fail in what they mean, whate'er they do:

You should have seen, man cannot tell to you  
The beauty of the ships of that my city.

That beauty now is spoiled by the sea's pity:  
For one may haunt the pier a score of times  
Hearing St. Nicholas' bells ring out the  
chimes,

Yet never see those proud ones swaying home,  
With mainyards backed and bows a cream of  
foam,

Those bows so lovely-curving, cut so fine  
Those coulters of the many-bubbled brine,  
As once, long since, when all the docks were  
filled

With that sea beauty man has ceased to build.

Yet though their splendour may have ceased  
to be,

Each played her sovereign part in making me.  
Now I return my thanks with heart and lips  
For the great queenliness of all those ships.

And first the first bright memory, still so  
clear,

An autumn evening in a golden year,  
When in the last lit moments before dark  
The *Chepica*, a steel-grey lovely barque,  
Her trucks aloft in sun-glow red as blood,  
Came to an anchor near us on the flood.  
Then come so many ships that I could fill

Three docks with their fair hulls remembered  
still,  
Each with her special memory's special grace,  
Riding the sea, making the waves give place  
To delicate high beauty; man's best strength,  
Noble in every line in all their length.  
*Ailsa, Genista*, ships, with long jib-booms,  
The *Wanderer*, with great beauty and strange  
dooms,  
*Liverpool* (mightiest then) superb, sublime,  
The *California* huge, as slow as Time.  
The *Cutty Sark*, the perfect *J. T. North*,  
The loveliest barque my city has sent forth,  
Dainty *Redgauntlet*, well remembered yet,  
The splendid *Argus*, with her skysail set,  
Stalwart *Drumcliff*, white-blocked majestic  
*Sierras*,  
Divine bright ships, the water's standard  
bearers.  
*Melpomene*, *Euphrosyne*, and their sweet  
Sea-troubling sisters of the Fernie Fleet.  
*Corunna* (in whom my friend died) and the  
old  
Long since loved *Esmeralda* long since sold.  
*Centurion* passed in Rio, *Glaucus* spoken,  
*Aladdin* burnt, the *Bidston* water broken,  
*Yola* in whom my friend sailed, *Dawpool*  
trim,  
Fierce-bower *Egeria* plunging to the swim,

*Stanmore* wide-sterned, sweet *Cupica*, tall  
    *Bard*  
Queen in all harbours with her moonsail yard.

Though I tell many there must still be others,  
McVickar Marshall's ships and Fernie  
    Brothers'

*Lochs, Counties, Shires, Drums*, the countless  
    lines

Whose house-flags all were once familiar signs  
At high main trucks on Mersey's windy ways  
When sun made all the wind-white water  
    blaze.

Their names bring back old mornings when  
    the docks

Shone with their house-flags and their painted  
    blocks,

Their raking masts below the Custom House  
And all the marvellous beauty of their bows.

Familiar steamers, too, majestic steamers,  
Shearing Atlantic roller-tops to streamers  
*Umbria, Etruria*, noble, still at sea,  
The grandest, then, that man had brought  
    to be.

*Majestic, City of Paris, City of Rome*,

Forever jealous racers, out and home.

The Alfred Holt's blue smokestacks down the  
    stream,



The fair *Arabian* with her bows a-cream.  
Booth liners, Anchor liners, Red Star liners,  
The marks and styles of countless ship de-  
signers.

The *Magdalena*, *Puno*, *Potosi*,  
Lost *Cotopaxi*, all well known to me.

These splendid ships, each with her grace, her  
glory,

Her memory of old song or comrade's story,  
Still in my mind the image of life's need,  
Beauty in hardest action, beauty indeed.

"They built great ships and sailed them"  
sounds most brave,

Whatever arts we have or fail to have;  
I touch my country's mind, I come to grips  
With half her purpose thinking of these  
ships.

That art untouched by softness, all that line  
Drawn ringing hard to stand the test of brine;  
That nobleness and grandeur, all that beauty  
Born of a manly life and bitter duty;  
That splendour of fine bows which yet could  
stand

The shock of rollers never checked by land.  
That art of masts, sail-crowded, fit to break,  
Yet stayed to strength, and back-stayed into  
rake,

The life demanded by that art, the keen  
Eye-puckered, hard-cased seamen, silent, lean,  
They are grander things than all the art of  
towns,  
Their tests are tempests and the sea that  
drowns.  
They are my country's line, her great art done  
By strong brains labouring on the thought  
unwon,  
They mark our passage as a race of men,  
Earth will not see such ships as those agen.

## SONNET ON THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE

(FROM THE PORTUGUESE OF ANTONIO DI  
FERREIRO)

That blessed sunlight, that once showed to me  
My way to heaven more plain, more certainly,  
And with her bright beams banished utterly  
All trace of mortal sorrow far from me,  
Has gone from me, has left her prison sad,  
And I am blind and alone and gone astray,  
Like a lost pilgrim on a desert way  
Wanting the blessed guide that once he had.

Thus with a spirit bowed and mind a blur  
I trace the holy steps where she has gone  
By valleys and by meadows and by mountains,

And everywhere I catch a glimpse of her,  
She takes me by the hand and leads me on,  
And my eyes follow her, my eyes made  
fountains.

### THEY CLOSED HER EYES

(FROM THE SPANISH OF DON GUSTAVO A.  
BECQUÉR)

They closed her eyes,  
They were still open;  
They hid her face  
With a white linen,  
And some sobbing,  
Others in silence,  
From the sad bedroom  
All came away.

The nightlight in a dish  
Burned on the floor;  
It threw on the wall  
The bed's shadow,  
And in that shadow  
One saw sometimes  
Drawn in sharp line  
The body's shape.

The dawn appeared.  
At its first whiteness,

With its thousand noises,  
The town awoke.  
Before that contrast  
Of light and darkness,  
Of life and strangeness,  
I thought a moment—

*My God, how lonely  
The dead are!*

On the shoulders of men  
To church they bore her,  
And in a chapel  
They left her bier.  
There they surrounded  
Her pale body  
With yellow candles  
And black stuffs.

At the last stroke  
Of the ringing for the souls  
An old crone finished  
Her last prayers.  
She crossed the narrow nave,  
The doors moaned,  
And the holy place  
Remained deserted.

From a clock one heard  
The measured ticking,

And from a candle  
The guttering.  
All things there  
Were so dark and mournful,  
So cold and rigid,  
That I thought a moment—  
*My God, how lonely*  
*The dead are!*

From the high belfry  
The tongue of iron  
Clanged, giving out  
A last farewell.  
Crape on their clothes,  
Her friends and kindred  
Passed by in line  
In homage to her.

In the last vault,  
Dark and narrow,  
The pickaxe opened  
A niche at one end;  
They laid her away there.  
Soon they bricked the place up,  
And with a gesture  
Bade grief farewell.

Pickaxe on shoulder,  
The gravedigger,

Singing between his teeth,  
Passed out of sight.  
The night came down  
It was all silent.  
Alone in darkness,  
I thought a moment—  
    *My God, how lonely*  
    *The dead are!*

In the dark nights  
Of bitter winter,  
When the wind makes  
The rafters creak,  
When the violent rain  
Lashes the windows,  
Lonely I remember  
That poor girl.

There falls the rain  
With its noise eternal  
There the north wind  
Fights with the rain.  
Stretched in the hollow  
Of the damp bricks,  
Perhaps her bones  
Freeze with the cold.

Does the dust return to dust?  
Does the soul fly to heaven?

Or is all vile matter,  
Rottenness, filthiness?  
I know not, but  
There is something—something—  
Something which gives me  
Loathing, terror,  
To leave the dead  
So alone, so wretched.

*Selections from*  
**GOOD FRIDAY**

A DRAMATIC POEM

MADMAN.

They cut my face, there's blood upon my  
brow.

So, let it run, I am an old man now,  
An old, blind beggar picking filth for bread.  
Once I wore silk, drank wine,  
Spent gold on women, feasted, all was mine;  
But this uneasy current in my head  
Burst, one full moon, and cleansed me, then I  
saw

Truth like a perfect crystal, life its flaw,  
I told the world, but I was mad, they said.

I had a valley farm above a brook,  
My sheep bells there were sweet,

And in the summer heat  
My mill wheels turned, yet all these things  
they took;  
Ah, and I gave them, all things I forsook  
But that green blade of wheat,  
My own soul's courage, that they did not take.  
I will go on, although my old heart ache.  
Not long, not long.  
Soon I shall pass behind  
This changing veil to that which does not  
change,  
My tired feet will range  
In some green valley of eternal mind  
Where Truth is daily like the water's song.

The wild-duck stringing through the sky,  
Are south away.  
Their green necks glitter as they fly,  
The lake is grey,  
So still, so lone, the fowler never heeds.  
The wind goes rustle, rustle, through the  
reeds.

\* \* \* \*

There they find peace to have their own wild  
souls.  
In that still lake,  
Only the moonrise or the wind controls  
The way they take,



Through the grey reeds, the cocking moor-  
hen's lair,  
Rippling the pool, or over leagues of air.

\* \* \* \*

Not thus, not thus are the wild souls of men.  
No peace for those  
Who step beyond the blindness of the pen  
To where the skies unclose.  
For them the spitting mob, the cross, the  
crown of thorns,  
The bull gone mad, the saviour on his horns.

\* \* \* \*

Beauty and Peace have made  
No peace, no still retreat,  
No solace, none.  
Only the unafraid  
Before life's roaring street  
Touch Beauty's feet,  
Know Truth, do as God bade,  
Become God's son. [Pause.]

Darkness come down, cover a brave man's  
pain.  
Let the bright soul go back to God again.  
Cover that tortured flesh, it only serves  
To hold that thing which other power nerves.  
Darkness, come down, let it be midnight here,

In the dark night the untroubled soul sings  
clear. [*It darkens.*]

I have been scourged, blinded and crucified,  
My blood burns on the stones of every street  
In every town; wherever people meet  
I have been hounded down, in anguish died.  
[*It darkens.*]

The creaking door of flesh rolls slowly back.  
Nerve by red nerve the links of living crack,  
Loosing the soul to tread another track.

Beyond the pain, beyond the broken clay,  
A glimmering country lies  
Where life is being wise,  
All of the beauty seen by truthful eyes  
Are lilies there, growing beside the way.  
Those golden ones will loose the torted  
hands,  
Smooth the scarred brow, gather the break-  
ing soul,  
Whose earthly moments drop like falling  
sands  
To leave the spirit whole.

Only a penny, a penny,  
Lilies brighter than any,  
Lilies whiter than snow.  
Beautiful lilies grow  
Wherever the truth so sweet

Has trodden with bloody feet,  
Has stood with a bloody brow.  
Friend, it is over now,  
The passion, the sweat, the pains,  
Only the truth remains.

\* \* \* \*

I cannot see what others see;  
Wisdom alone is kind to me,  
Wisdom that comes from Agony.

\* \* \* \*

Wisdom that lives in the pure skies,  
The untouched star, the spirit's eyes;  
O Beauty, touch me, make me wise.

*Selections from*  
*LOLLINGDON DOWNS*

O wretched man, that for a little mile  
Crawls beneath heaven for his brother's  
blood,  
Whose days the planets number with their  
style,  
To whom all earth is slave, all living, food!  
O withering man, within whose folded shell  
Lies yet the seed, the spirit's quickening corn,  
That Time and Sun will change out of the  
cell

Into green meadows, in the world unborn!  
If Beauty be a dream, do but resolve  
And fire shall come, that in the stubborn clay  
Works to make perfect till the rocks dissolve,  
The barriers burst, and Beauty takes her way:  
Beauty herself, within whose blossoming  
    Spring  
Even wretched man shall clap his hands and  
    sing.

Out of the special cell's most special sense  
Came the suggestion when the light was  
    sweet;  
All skill, all beauty, all magnificence,  
Are hints so caught, man's glimpse of the  
    complete.  
And, though the body rots, that sense sur-  
    vives;  
Being of life's own essence, it endures  
(Fruit of the spirit's tillage in men's lives)  
Round all this ghost that wandering flesh  
    immures.  
That is our friend, who, when the iron brain  
Assails, or the earth clogs, or the sun hides,  
Is the good God to whom none calls in vain,  
Man's Achieved Good, which, being Life,  
    abides:  
The man-made God, that man in happy breath  
Makes in despite of Time and dusty Death.

I could not sleep for thinking of the sky,  
The unending sky, with all its million suns  
Which turn their planets everlastingly  
In nothing, where the fire-haired comet  
runs.

If I could sail that nothing, I should cross  
Silence and emptiness with dark stars passing;  
ing;

Then, in the darkness, see a point of gloss  
Burn to a glow, and glare, and keep amassing,  
ing,

And rage into a sun with wandering planets,  
And drop behind; and then, as I proceed,  
See his last light upon his last moon's  
granites

Die to a dark that would be night indeed:  
Night where my soul might sail a million  
years

In nothing, not even Death, not even tears.

How did the nothing come, how did these  
fires,

These million-leagues of fires, first toss their  
hair,

Licking the moons from heaven in their ires,  
Flinging them forth for them to wander  
there?

What was the Mind? Was it a mind which  
thought?

Or chance? or law? or conscious law? or  
power?

Or a vast balance by vast clashes wrought?  
Or Time at trial with Matter for an hour?  
Or is it all a body where the cells  
Are living things supporting something  
strange,

Whose mighty heart the singing planet swells  
As it shoulders nothing in unending change?  
Is this green earth of many-peopled pain  
Part of a life, a cell within a brain?

It may be so; but let the unknown be.  
We, on this earth, are servants of the sun:  
Out of the sun comes all the quick in me,  
His golden touch is life to everyone.  
His power it is that makes us spin through  
space;

His youth is April and his manhood bread;  
Beauty is but a looking on his face;  
He clears the mind, he makes the roses red.  
What he may be, who knows? But we are  
his;

We roll through nothing round him, year by  
year,

The withering leaves upon a tree which is,  
Each with his greed, his little power, his fear,  
What we may be, who knows? But every one  
Is dust on dust a servant of the sun.

What is this life which uses living cells  
It knows not how nor why, for no known end,  
This soul of man upon whose fragile shells  
Of blood and brain his very powers depend?  
Pour out its little blood or touch its brain,  
The thing is helpless, gone, no longer known;  
The carrion cells are never man again,  
No hand relights the little candle blown.  
It comes not from Without, but from the  
sperm  
Fed in the womb; it is a man-made thing  
That takes from man its power to live a  
term,  
Served by live cells of which it is the King.  
Can it be blood and brain? It is most great.  
Through blood and brain alone it wrestles  
Fate.

Can it be blood and brain, this transient force  
Which, by an impulse, seizes flesh and grows  
To man, the thing less splendid than the  
horse,  
More blind than owls, less lovely than the  
rose?  
O, by a power unknown it works the cells  
Of blood and brain; it has the power to see  
Beyond the apparent thing the something else  
Which it inspires dust to bring to be.  
Both blood and brain are its imperfect tools,

Easily wrecked, soon worn, slow to attain;  
Only by years of toil the master rules  
To lovely ends those servants, blood and  
brain.

And Death, a touch, a germ, has still the  
force  
To make him ev'n as the rose, the owl, the  
horse.

Not only blood and brain its servants are;  
There is a finer power that needs no slaves,  
Whose lovely service distance cannot bar,  
Nor the green sea with all her hell of waves;  
Nor snowy mountains, nor the desert sand,  
Nor heat, nor storm, it bends to no control;  
It is a stretching of the spirit's hand  
To touch the brother's or the sister's soul;  
So that from darkness in the narrow room  
I can step forth and be about her heart,  
Needing no star, no lantern in the gloom,  
No word from her, no pointing on the chart,  
Only red knowledge of a window flung  
Wide to the night, and calling without  
tongue.

Here in the self is all that man can know  
Of Beauty, all the wonder, all the power,  
All the unearthly colour, all the glow,  
Here in the self which withers like a flower;  
Here in the self which fades as hours pass,



And droops and dies and rots and is forgotten  
Sooner, by ages, than the mirroring glass  
In which it sees its glory still unrotten.  
Here in the flesh, within the flesh, behind,  
Swift in the blood and throbbing on the bone,  
Beauty herself, the universal mind,  
Eternal April wandering alone;  
The God, the holy Ghost, the atoning Lord,  
Here in the flesh, the never yet explored.

Flesh, I have knocked at many a dusty door,  
Gone down full many a windy midnight lane,  
Probed in old walls and felt along the floor,  
Pressed in blind hope the lighted window-  
pane.

But useless all, though sometimes when the  
moon

Was full in heaven and the sea was full,  
Along my body's alleys came a tune  
Played in the tavern by the Beautiful.  
Then for an instant I have felt at point  
To find and seize her, whosoe'er she be,  
Whether some saint whose glory doth anoint  
Those whom she loves, or but a part of me,  
Or something that the things not understood  
Make for their uses out of flesh and blood.

But all has passed, the tune has died away,  
The glamour gone, the glory; is it chance?

Is the unfeeling mud stabbed by a ray  
Cast by an unseen splendour's great advance?  
Or does the glory gather crumb by crumb  
Unseen, within, as coral islands rise,  
Till suddenly the apparitions come  
Above the surface, looking at the skies?  
Or does sweet Beauty dwell in lovely things  
Scattering the holy hintings of her name  
In women, in dear friends, in flowers, in  
    springs,  
In the brook's voice, for us to catch the same?  
Or is it we who are Beauty, we who ask?  
We by whose gleams the world fulfils its task.

These myriad days, these many thousand  
    hours,  
A man's long life, so choked with dusty  
    things,  
How little perfect poise with perfect powers,  
Joy at the heart and Beauty at the springs.  
One hour, or two, or three, in long years  
    scattered  
Sparks from a smithy that have fired a thatch,  
Are all that life has given and all that mat-  
    tered;  
The rest, all heaving at a moveless latch.  
For these, so many years of useless toil,  
Despair, endeavour, and again despair,

Sweat, that the base machine may have its  
oil,  
Idle delight to tempt one everywhere.  
A life upon the cross. To make amends,  
Three flaming memories that the deathbed  
ends.

There, on the darkened deathbed, dies the  
brain  
That flared three several times in seventy  
years.

It cannot lift the silly hand again,  
Nor speak, nor sing, it neither sees nor hears;  
And muffled mourners put it in the ground  
And then go home, and in the earth it lies  
Too dark for vision and too deep for sound,  
The million cells that made a good man wise.  
Yet for a few short years an influence stirs,  
A sense or wraith or essence of him dead,  
Which makes insensate things its ministers  
To those beloved, his spirit's daily bread;  
Then that, too, fades; in book or deed a spark  
Lingers, then that, too, fades; then all is dark.

So in the empty sky the stars appear,  
Are bright in heaven marching through the  
sky,  
Spinning their planets, each one to his year,  
Tossing their fiery hair until they die;

Then in the tower afar the watcher sees  
The sun, that burned, less noble than it was,  
Less noble still, until by dim degrees  
No spark of him is specklike in his glass.  
Then blind and dark in heaven the sun proceeds,  
Vast, dead and hideous, knocking on his moons,  
Till crashing on his like creation breeds,  
Striking such life, a constellation swoons;  
From dead things striking fire a new sun springs,  
New fire, new life, new planets with new wings.

It may be so with us, that in the dark,  
When we have done with time and wander space,  
Some meeting of the blind may strike a spark,  
And to Death's empty mansion give a grace.  
It may be, that the loosened soul may find  
Some new delight of living without limbs,  
Bodiless joy of flesh-untrammelled mind,  
Peace like a sky where starlike spirit swims.  
It may be, that the million cells of sense,  
Loosed from their seventy years' adhesion,  
pass  
Each to some joy of changed experience,

Weight in the earth or glory in the grass.  
It may be, that we cease; we cannot tell.  
Even if we cease, life is a miracle.

What am I, Life? A thing of watery salt  
Held in cohesion by unresting cells  
Which work they know not why, which never  
halt,

Myself unwitting where their master dwells.  
I do not bid them, yet they toil, they spin:  
A world which uses me as I use them,  
Nor do I know which end or which begin,  
Nor which to praise, which pamper, which  
condemn.

So, like a marvel in a marvel set,  
I answer to the vast, as wave by wave  
The sea of air goes over, dry or wet,  
Or the full moon comes swimming from her  
cave,

Or the great sun comes north, this myriad I  
Tingles, not knowing how, yet wondering why.

If I could get within this changing I,  
This ever altering thing which yet persists,  
Keeping the features it is reckoned by,  
While each component atom breaks or twists,  
If, wandering past strange groups of shifting  
forms,

Cells at their hidden marvels hard at work,

Pale from much toil, or red from sudden  
storms,

I might attain to where the Rulers lurk.  
If, pressing past the guards in those grey  
gates,

The brain's most folded, intertwined shell,  
I might attain to that which alters fates,  
The King, the supreme self, the Master Cell;  
Then, on Man's earthly peak, I might behold  
The unearthly self beyond, unguessed, untold.

What is this atom which contains the whole,  
This miracle which needs adjuncts so strange,  
This, which imagined God and is the soul,  
The steady star persisting amid change?  
What waste, that smallness of such power  
should need

Such clumsy tools so easy to destroy,  
Such wasteful servants difficult to feed,  
Such indirect dark avenues to joy.  
Why, if its business is not mainly earth,  
Should it demand such heavy chains to sense?  
A heavenly thing demands a swifter birth,  
A quicker hand to act intelligence;  
An earthly thing were better like the rose,  
At peace with clay from which its beauty  
grows.

Ah, we are neither heaven nor earth, but men;  
Something that uses and despises both,

That takes its earth's contentment in the pen,  
Then sees the world's injustice and is wroth,  
And flinging off youth's happy promise, flies  
Up to some breach, despising earthly things,  
And, in contempt of hell and heaven, dies  
Rather than bear some yoke of priests or  
kings.

Our joys are not of heaven nor earth, but  
man's,

A woman's beauty, or a child's delight,  
The trembling blood when the discoverer  
scans

The sought-for world, the guessed-at satel-  
lite;

The ringing scene, the stone at point to blush  
For unborn men to look at and say "Hush."

Roses are beauty, but I never see  
Those blood drops from the burning heart  
of June

Glowing like thought upon the living tree  
Without a pity that they die so soon,  
Die into petals, like those roses old,  
Those women, who were summer in men's  
hearts

Before the smile upon the Sphinx was cold  
Or sand had hid the Syrian and his arts.  
O myriad' dust of beauty that lies thick  
Under our feet that not a single grain

But stirred and moved in beauty and was  
quick

For one brief moon and died nor lived again;  
But when the moon rose lay upon the grass  
Pasture to living beauty, life that was.

Over the church's door they moved a stone,  
And there, unguessed, forgotten, mortared up,  
Lay the priest's cell where he had lived alone.  
There was his ashy hearth, his drinking cup,  
There was his window whence he saw the  
Host,

The God whose beauty quickened bread and  
wine;

The skeleton of a religion lost,  
The ghostless bones of what had been divine.  
O many a time the dusty masons come  
Knocking their trowels in the stony brain  
To cells where perished priests had once a  
home,

Or where devout brows pressed the window  
pane,

Watching the thing made God, the God whose  
bones

Bind underground our soul's foundation  
stones.

O little self, within whose smallness lies  
All that man was, and is, and will become,



Atom unseen that comprehends the skies  
And tells the tracks by which the planets  
    roam;  
That, without moving, knows the joys of  
    wings,  
The tiger's strength, the eagle's secrecy,  
And in the hovel can consort with kings,  
Or clothe a God with his own mystery.  
O with what darkness do we cloak thy light,  
What dusty folly gather thee for food,  
Thou who alone art knowledge and delight,  
The heavenly bread, the beautiful, the good.  
O living self, O God, O morning star,  
Give us thy light, forgive us what we are.

I went into the fields, but you were there  
Waiting for me, so all the summer flowers  
Were only glimpses of your starry powers;  
Beautiful and inspired dust they were.

I went down by the waters, and a bird  
Sang with your voice in all the unknown tones  
Of all that self of you I have not heard,  
So that my being felt you to the bones.

I went into the house, and shut the door  
To be alone, but you were there with me;  
All beauty in a little room may be,  
Though the roof lean and muddy be the floor

Then in my bed I bound my tired eyes  
To make a darkness for my weary brain;  
But like a presence you were there again,  
Being and real, beautiful and wise,

So that I could not sleep, and cried aloud,  
"You strange grave thing, what is it you  
would say?"

The redness of your dear lips dimmed to  
grey,  
The waters ebbd, the moon hid in a cloud.

Wherever beauty has been quick in clay  
Some effluence of it lives, a spirit dwells,  
Beauty that death can never take away  
Mixed with the air that shakes the flower  
bells;

So that by waters where the apples fall,  
Or in lone glens, or valleys full of flowers,  
Or in the streets where bloody tidings call,  
The haunting waits the mood that makes it  
ours.

Then at a turn, a word, an act, a thought,  
Such difference comes; the spirit apprehends  
That place's glory; for where beauty fought  
Under the veil the glory never ends;  
But the still grass, the leaves, the trembling  
flower

Keep, through dead time, that everlasting  
hour.

Not for the anguish suffered is the slur,  
Not for the woman's taunts, the mocks of  
men;  
No, but because you never welcomed her,  
Her of whose beauty I am only the pen.

There was a dog, dog-minded, with dog's eyes,  
Damned by a dog's brute-nature to be true.  
Something within her made his spirit wise;  
He licked her hand, he knew her; not so you.

When all adulterate beauty has gone by,  
When all inanimate matter has gone down,  
We will arise and walk, that dog and I,  
The only two who knew her in the town.

We'll range the pleasant mountain side by  
side,  
Seeking the blood-stained flowers where  
Christs have died.

You will remember me in days to come,  
With love, or pride, or pity, or contempt,  
So will my friends (not many friends, yet  
some),

When this my life will be a dream out-  
dreamt;

And one, remembering friendship by the fire,  
And one, remembering love time in the dark,  
And one, remembering unfulfilled desire,  
Will sigh, perhaps, yet be beside the mark;  
For this my body with its wandering ghost  
Is nothing solely but an empty grange,  
Dark in a night that owls inhabit most,  
Yet when the King rides by there comes a  
change

The windows gleam, the cresset's fiery hair  
Blasts the blown branch and beauty lodges  
there.

If Beauty be at all, if, beyond sense,  
There be a wisdom piercing into brains,  
Why should the glory wait on impotence,  
Biding its time till blood is in the veins?

There is no beauty, but, when thought is  
quick,  
Out of the noisy sickroom of ourselves  
Some flattery comes to try to cheat the sick,  
Some drowsy drug is groped for on the  
shelves.

There is no beauty, for we tread a scene  
Red to the eye with blood of living things;

Thought is but joy from murder that has  
been,

Life is but brute at war upon its kings.

There is no beauty, nor could beauty care  
For us, this dust, that men make everywhere.

If all be governed by the moving stars,  
If passing planets bring events to be,  
Searing the face of Time with bloody scars,  
Drawing men's souls even as the moon the  
sea,

If as they pass they make a current pass  
Across man's life and heap it to a tide,  
We are but pawns, ignobler than the grass  
Cropped by the beast and crunched and tossed  
aside.

Is all this beauty that doth inhabit heaven  
Train of a planet's fire? Is all this lust  
A chymic means by warring stars contriven  
To bring the violets out of Cæsar's dust?  
Better be grass, or in some hedge unknown  
The spilling rose whose beauty is its own.

In emptiest furthest heaven where no stars  
are,

Perhaps some planet of our master sun  
Still rolls an unguessed orbit round its star,  
Unthought, unseen, unknown of anyone.  
Roving dead space according to its law,

Casting our light on burnt-out suns and blind,  
Singing in the frozen void its word of awe,  
One wandering thought in all that idiot mind.  
And, in some span of many a thousand year,  
Passing through heaven its influence may  
arouse

Beauty unguessed in those who habit here,  
And men may rise with glory on their brows  
And feel new life like fire, and see the old  
Fall from the dead, the bronze's broken  
mould.

Death lies in wait for you, you wild thing in  
the wood,

Shy-footed beauty dear, half-seen, half-under-  
stood.

Glimpsed in the beech-wood dim and in the  
dropping fir,

Shy like a fawn and sweet and beauty's min-  
ister.

Glimpsed as in flying clouds by night the  
little moon,

A wonder, a delight, a paleness passing soon.

Only a moment held, only an hour seen,  
Only an instant known in all that life has been,  
One instant in the sand to drink that gush  
of grace,

The beauty of your way, the marvel of your  
face.

Death lies in wait for you, but few short  
hours he gives;  
I perish even as you by whom all spirit lives.  
Come to me, spirit, come, and fill my hour  
of breath  
With hours of life in life that pay no toll to  
death.

Go, spend your penny, Beauty, when you will,  
In the grave's darkness let the stamp be lost.  
The water still will bubble from the hill,  
And April quick the meadows with her ghost  
Over the grass the daffodils will shiver,  
The primroses with their pale beauty abound,  
The blackbird be a lover and make quiver  
With his glad singing the great soul of the  
ground;  
So that if the body rot, it will not matter;  
Up in the earth the great game will go on,  
The coming of spring and the running of the  
water,  
And the young things glad of the womb's  
darkness gone.  
And the joy we felt will be a part of the  
glory  
In the lover's kiss that makes the old couple's  
story.

Let that which is to come be as it may,

Darkness, extinction, justice, life intense,  
The flies are happy in the summer day,  
Flies will be happy many summers hence.  
Time with his antique breeds that built the  
Sphinx,  
Time with her men to come whose wings will  
tower,  
Poured and will pour, not as the wise man  
thinks,  
But with blind force, to each his little hour.  
And when the hour has struck, comes death  
or change,  
Which, whether good or ill we cannot tell,  
But the blind planet will wander through her  
range  
Bearing men like us who will serve as well.  
The sun will rise, the winds that ever move  
Will blow our dust that once were men in  
love.

*From GALLIPOLI*

*EPILOGUE*

Even so was wisdom proven blind,  
So courage failed, so strength was chained;  
Even so the gods, whose seeing mind  
Is not as ours, ordained.



*Selections from*  
**REYNARD THE FOX**

On old Cold Crendon's windy tops  
Grows wintrily Blown Hilcote Copse,  
Wind-bitten beech with badger barrows,  
Where brocks eat wasp-grubs with their  
    marrows,  
And foxes lie on short-grassed turf,  
Nose between paws, to hear the surf  
Of wind in the beeches drowsily.  
There was our fox bred lustily  
Three years before, and there he berthed,  
Under the beech-roots snugly earthed,  
With a roof of flint and a floor of chalk  
And ten bitten hens' heads each on its stalk,  
Some rabbits' paws, some fur from scuts,  
A badger's corpse and a smell of guts.  
And there on the night before my tale  
He trotted out for a point in the vale.

\*           \*           \*           \*

He saw, from the cover edge, the valley  
Go trooping down with its droops of sally  
To the brimming river's lipping bend,  
And a light in the inn at Water's End.  
He heard the owl go hunting by  
And the shriek of the mouse the owl made  
    die,  
And the purr of the owl as he tore the red

Strings from between his claws and fed;  
The smack of joy of the horny lips  
Marbled green with the blobby strips.  
He saw the farms where the dogs were bark-  
ing,  
Cold Crendon Court and Copsecote Larking;  
The fault with the spring as bright as gleed,  
Green-slash-laced with water-weed.  
A glare in the sky still marked the town,  
Though all folk slept and the blinds were  
down,  
The street lamps watched the empty square,  
The night-cat sang his evil there.

\* \* \* \*

The fox's nose tipped up and round,  
Since smell is a part of sight and sound.  
Delicate smells were drifting by,  
The sharp nose flaired them heedfully;  
Partridges in the clover stubble,  
Crouched in a ring for the stoat to nubble.  
Rabbit bucks beginning to box;  
A scratching place for the pheasant cocks,  
A hare in the dead grass near the drain,  
And another smell like the spring again.

\* \* \* \*

A faint rank taint like April coming,  
It touched his heart till his blood went  
drumming,

For somewhere out by Ghost Heath Stubs  
Was a roving vixen wanting cubs.  
Over the valley, floating faint  
On a warmth of windflaw, came the taint;  
He cocked his ears, he upped his brush,  
And he went upwind like an April thrush.

\* \* \* \*

By the Roman Road to Braiches Ridge,  
Where the fallen willow makes a bridge,  
Over the brook by White Hart's Thorn  
To the acres thin with pricking corn,  
Over the sparse green hair of the wheat,  
By the Clench Brook Mill at Clench Brook  
Leat,  
Through Cowfoot Pastures to Nonely  
Stevens,  
And away to Poltrewood St. Jevons.  
Past Tott Hill Down all snaked with meuses,  
Past Clench St. Michael and Naunton Crucis,  
Past Howle's Oak Farm where the raving  
brain  
Of a dog who heard him foamed his chain;  
Then off, as the farmer's window opened,  
Past Stonepits Farms to Upton Hope End,  
Over short sweet grass and worn flint arrows  
And the three dumb hows of Tencombe Bar-  
rows.  
And away and away with a rolling scramble,

Through the sally and up the bramble,  
With a nose for the smells the night wind  
carried,  
And his red fell clean for being married;  
For clicketting time and Ghost Heath Wood  
Had put the violet in his blood.

\* \* \* \*

At Tencombe Rings near the Manor Linney  
His foot made the great black stallion  
whinny,  
And the stallion's whinny aroused the stable  
And the bloodhound bitches stretched their  
cable,  
And the clink of the bloodhounds' chain  
aroused  
The sweet-breathed kye as they chewed and  
drowsed,  
And the stir of the cattle changed the dream  
Of the cat in the loft to tense green gleam.  
The red-wattled black cock hot from Spain  
Crowed from his perch for dawn again,  
His breast-pufft hens, one-legged on perch,  
Gurgled, beak-down, like men in church,  
They crooned in the dark, lifting one red eye  
In the raftered roost as the fox went by.

\* \* \* \*

By Tencombe Regis and Slaughters Court,  
Through the great grass square of Roman  
Fort,

By Nun's Wood Yews and the Hungry Hill,  
And the Corpse Way Stones all standing still.  
By Seven Springs Mead to Deerlip Brook,  
And a lolloping leap to Water Hook.  
Then with eyes like sparks and his blood  
    awoken,  
Over the grass to Water's Oaken,  
And over the hedge and into ride  
In Ghost Heath Wood for his roving bride.

\*           \*           \*           \*

Before the dawn he had loved and fed  
And found a kennel, and gone to bed  
On a shelf of grass in a thick of gorse  
That would bleed a hound and blind a horse.  
There he slept in the mild west weather  
With his nose and brush well tuckt together,  
He slept like a child, who sleeps yet hears  
With the self who needs neither eyes nor  
    ears.

\*           \*           \*           \*

He slept while the pheasant cock untucked  
His head from his wing, flew down and  
    kukked,  
While the drove of the starlings whirred and  
    wheeled  
Out of the ash-trees into field,

While with great black flags that flogged and  
paddled  
The rooks went out to the plough and  
straddled,  
Straddled wide on the moist red cheese  
Of the furrows driven at Uppat's Leas.

\* \* \* \*

Down in the village men awoke,  
The chimneys breathed with a faint blue  
smoke.  
The fox slept on, though tweaks and twitches,  
Due to his dreams, ran down his flitches.

\* \* \* \*

The cows were milked and the yards were  
sluict,  
And cocks and hens let out of roost,  
Windows were opened, mats were beaten,  
All men's breakfasts were cooked and eaten;  
But out in the gorse on the grassy shelf  
The sleeping fox looked after himself.

\* \* \* \*

Deep in his dream he heard the life  
Of the woodland seek for food or wife,  
The hop of a stoat, a buck that thumped,  
The squeal of a rat as a weasel jumped,  
The blackbird's chackering scattering crying,

The rustling bents from the rabbits flying,  
Cows in a byre, and distant men,  
And Condicote church-clock striking ten.

\* \* \* \*

At eleven o'clock a boy went past,  
With a rough-haired terrier following fast.  
The boy's sweet whistle and dog's quick yap  
Woke the fox from out of his nap.

\* \* \* \*

He rose and stretched till the claws in his  
pads  
Stuck hornily out like long back gads.  
He listened a while, and his nose went round  
To catch the smell of the distant sound.

\* \* \* \*

The windward smells came free from taint—  
They were rabbit, strongly, with lime-kiln,  
faint,  
A wild-duck, likely, at Sars Holt Pond,  
And sheep on the Sars Holt Down beyond.

\* \* \* \*

The leeward smells were much less certain,  
For the Ghost Heath Hill was like a curtain,  
Yet vague, from the leeward, now and then,  
Came muffled sounds like the sound of men.

\* \* \* \*

He moved to his right to a clearer space,  
And all his soul came into his face,  
Into his eyes and into his nose,  
As over the hill a murmur rose.  
His ears were cocked and his keen nose  
    flaired,  
He sneered with his lips till his teeth were  
    bared,  
He trotted right and lifted a pad  
Trying to test what foes he had.

\*           \*           \*           \*

On Ghost Heath turf was a steady drumming  
Which sounded like horses quickly coming,  
It died as the hunt went down the dip,  
Then Malapert yelped at Myngs's whip.  
A bright iron horseshoe clinkt on stone,  
Then a man's voice spoke, not one alone,  
Then a burst of laughter, swiftly still,  
Muffled away by Ghost Heath Hill.  
Then, indistinctly, the clop, clip, clep,  
On Brady Ride, of a horse's step.  
Then silence, then, in a burst, much clearer,  
Voices and horses coming nearer,  
And another noise, of a pit-pat beat  
On the Ghost Hill grass, of foxhound feet.

\*           \*           \*           \*

He sat on his haunches listening hard,  
While his mind went over the compass card.



Men were coming and rest was done,  
But he still had time to get fit to run;  
He could outlast horse and outrace hound,  
But men were devils from Lobs's Pound.  
Scent was burning, the going good,  
The world one lust for a fox's blood,  
The main earths stopped and the drains put  
to,

And fifteen miles to the land he knew.  
But of all the ills, the ill least pleasant  
Was to run in the light when men were  
present

Men in the fields to shout and sign  
For a lift of hounds to a fox's line.  
Men at the earth, at the long point's end,  
Men at each check and none his friend,  
Guessing each shift that a fox contrives;  
But still, needs must when the devil drives.

\* \* \* \*

He readied himself, then a soft horn blew,  
Then a clear voice carolled, "Ed-hoick!  
Eleu!"

Then the wood-end rang with the clear voice  
crying

And the crackle of scrub where hounds were  
trying.

Then the horn blew nearer, a hound's voice  
quivered,

Then another, then more, till his body shivered,  
He left his kennel and trotted thence  
With his ears flexed back and his nerves all tense.

He trotted down with his nose intent  
For a fox's line to cross his scent,  
It was only fair (he being a stranger)  
That the native fox should have the danger.  
Danger was coming, so swift, so swift,  
That the pace of his trot began to lift,  
The blue-winged Judas, a jay began  
Swearing, hounds whimpered, air stank of man.

\* \* \* \*

He hurried his trotting, he now felt frightened,  
It was his poor body made hounds excited.  
He felt as he ringed the great wood through,  
That he ought to make for the land he knew.

\* \* \* \*

Then the hounds' excitement quivered and quickened,  
Then a horn blew death till his marrow sickened,  
Then the wood behind was a crash of cry  
For the blood in his veins; it made him fly.

\* \* \* \*

They were on his line; it was death to stay.  
He must make for home by the shortest way,  
But with all this yelling and all this wrath  
And all these devils, how find a path?

\* \* \* \*

He ran like a stag to the wood's north corner,  
Where the hedge was thick and the ditch a  
yawner,  
But the scarlet glimpse of Myngs on Turk,  
Watching the woodside, made him shirk.

\* \* \* \*

He ringed the wood and looked at the south.  
What wind there was blew into his mouth.  
But close to the woodland's blackthorn  
thicket

Was Dansey, still as a stone, on picket.  
At Dansey's back were a twenty more  
Watching the cover and pressing fore.

\* \* \* \*

The fox drew in and flaired with his muzzle.  
Death was there if he messed the puzzle.  
There were men without and hounds within,  
A crying that stiffened the hair on skin,  
Teeth in cover and death without,  
Both deaths coming, and no way out.

\* \* \* \*

His nose ranged swiftly, his heart beat fast,  
Then a crashing cry rose up in a blast,

Then horse-hooves trampled, then horses'  
fitches  
Burst their way through the hazel switches.  
Then the horn again made the hounds like  
mad,  
And a man, quite near, said, "Found, by  
Gad!"  
And a man, quite near, said, "Now he'll break.  
Lark's Leybourne Copse is the line he'll  
take."  
And men moved up with their talk and stink  
And the traplike noise of the horseshoe clink.  
Men whose coming meant death from teeth  
In a worrying wrench, with him beneath.

\* \* \* \*

The fox sneaked down by the cover side  
(With his ears flexed back) as a snake would  
glide;  
He took the ditch at the cover-end,  
He hugged the ditch as his only friend.  
The blackbird cock with the golden beak  
Got out of his way with a jabbering shriek,  
And the shriek told Tom on the raking bay  
That for eighteenpence he was gone away.

\* \* \* \*

He ran in the hedge in the triple growth  
Of bramble and hawthorn, glad of both,

Till a couple of fields were past, and then  
Came the living death of the dread of men.

\* \* \* \*

Then, as he listened, he heard a "Hoy!"  
Tom Dansey's horn and "Awa-wa-woy!"  
Then all hounds crying with all their forces,  
Then a thundering down of seventy horses.  
Robin Dawe's horn and halloos of "Hey  
Hark Hollar, Hoik!" and "Gone away!"  
"Hark Hollar Hoik!" and a smack of the  
whip.

A yelp as a tail hound caught the clip.  
"Hark Hollar, Hark Hollar!" then Robin  
made

Pip go crash through the cut and laid.  
Hounds were over and on his line  
With a head like bees upon Tipple Tine.  
The sound of the nearness sent a flood  
Of terror of death through the fox's blood.  
He upped his brush and he cocked his nose,  
And he went upwind as a racer goes.

\* \* \* \*

Bold Robin Dawe was over first,  
Cheering his hounds on at the burst;  
The field were spurring to be in it.  
"Hold hard, sirs, give them half a minute,"

Came from Sir Peter on his white.  
The hounds went romping with delight  
Over the grass and got together,  
The tail hounds galloped hell-for-leather  
After the pack at Myngs's yell.  
A cry like every kind of bell  
Rang from these rompers as they raced.

\* \* \* \*

The riders, thrusting to be placed,  
Jammed down their hats and shook their  
horses;  
The hounds romped past with all their forces,  
They crashed into the blackthorn fence.  
The scent was heavy on their sense,  
So hot, it seemed the living thing,  
It made the blood within them sing;  
Gusts of it made their hackles rise,  
Hot gulps of it were agonies  
Of joy, and thirst for blood and passion.  
"Forrard!" cried Robin, "that's the fashion."  
He raced beside his pack to cheer.

The field's noise died upon his ear,  
A faint horn, far behind, blew thin  
In cover, lest some hound were in.  
Then instantly the great grass rise  
Shut field and cover from his eyes,  
He and his racers were alone.

"A dead fox or a broken bone."  
Said Robin, peering for his prey.

\* \* \* \*

The rise, which shut the field away,  
Showed him the vale's great map spread out,  
The down's lean flank and thrusting snout,  
Pale pastures, red-brown plough, dark wood,  
Blue distance, still as solitude,  
Glitter of water here and there,  
The trees so delicately bare,  
The dark green gorse and bright green holly.  
"O glorious God," he said, "how jolly!"  
And there downhill two fields ahead  
The lolloping red dog-fox sped  
Over Poor Pastures to the brook.  
He grasped these things in one swift look,  
Then dived into the bullfinch heart  
Through thorns that ripped his sleeves apart  
And skutched new blood upon his brow.  
"His point's Lark's Leybourne Covers now,"  
Said Robin, landing with a grunt.  
"Forrard, my beautifuls!"

The hunt  
Followed downhill to race with him,  
White Rabbit, with his swallow's skim,  
Drew within hail. "Quick burst, Sir Peter."  
"A traveller. Nothing could be neater.  
Making for Godsdown Clumps, I take it?"

**"Lark's Leybourne, sir, if he can make it.  
Forrard!"**

**Bill Ridden thundered down,  
His big mouth grinned beneath his frown,  
The hounds were going away from horses.  
He saw the glint of watercourses,  
Yell Brook and Wittold's Dyke, ahead,  
His horseshoes sliced the green turf red.  
Young Cothill's chaser rushed and past him,  
Nob Manor, running next, said "Blast him!  
The poet chap who thinks he rides."  
Hugh Colway's mare made straking strides  
Across the grass, the Colonel next,  
Then Squire, volleying oaths, and vext,  
Fighting his hunter for refusing;  
Bell Ridden, like a cutter cruising,  
Sailing the grass; then Cob on Warder,  
Then Minton Price upon Marauder;  
Ock Gurney with his eyes intense,  
Burning as with a different sense,  
His big mouth muttering glad "By damns!"  
Then Pete, crouched down from head to  
hams,  
Rapt like a saint, bright focussed flame;  
Bennett, with devils in his wame,  
Chewing black cud and spitting slanting;  
Copse scattering jests and Stukely ranting;  
Sal Ridden taking line from Dansey;**



Long Robert forcing Necromancy;  
A dozen more with bad beginnings;  
Myngs riding hard to snatch an innings.  
A wild last hound with high shrill yelps  
Smacked forrard with some whipthong  
skelps.

Then last of all, at top of rise,  
The crowd on foot, all gasps and eyes;  
The run uphill had winded them.

\* \* \* \*

They saw the Yell Brook like a gem  
Blue in the grass a short mile on;  
They heard faint cries, but hounds were gone  
A good eight fields and out of sight,  
Except a rippled glimmer white  
Going away with dying cheering,  
And scarlet flappings disappearing,  
And scattering horses going, going,  
Going like mad, White Rabbit snowing  
Far on ahead, a loose horse taking  
Fence after fence with stirrups shaking,  
And scarlet specks and dark specks dwindling.

\* \* \* \*

Nearer, were twigs knocked into kindling,  
A much bashed fence still dropping stick,  
Flung clods still quivering from the kick;  
Cut hoof-marks pale in cheesy clay,  
The horse-smell blowing clean away;

Birds flitting back into the cover.  
One last faint cry, then all was over.  
The hunt had been, and found, and gone.

\* \* \* \*

*Selections from*  
*ENSLAVED*

All early in the April, when daylight comes  
at five,  
I went into the garden most glad to be alive;  
The thrushes and the blackbirds were singing  
in the thorn,  
The April flowers were singing for joy of  
being born.

I smelt the dewy morning come blowing  
through the woods  
Where all the wilding cherries do toss their  
snowy snoods;  
I thought of the running water where sweet  
white violets grow.  
I said: "I'll pick them for her, because she  
loves them so."

So in the dewy morning I turned to climb the  
hill,  
Beside the running water whose tongue is  
never still.

Oh, delicate green and dewy were all the  
budding trees;  
The blue dog-violets grew there, and many  
primroses.

Out of the wood I wandered, but paused  
upon the heath  
To watch, beyond the tree-tops, the wrinkled  
sea beneath;  
Its blueness and its stillness were trembling  
as it lay  
In the old un-autumned beauty that never  
goes away.

And the beauty of the water brought my love  
into my mind,  
Because all sweet love is beauty, and the  
loved thing turns to kind;  
And I thought, "It is a beauty spread for  
setting of your grace,  
O white violet of a woman with the April in  
your face."

So I gathered the white violets where young  
men pick them still,  
And I turned to cross the woodland to her  
house beneath the hill,  
And I thought of her delight in the flowers  
that I brought her,

Bright like sunlight, sweet like singing, cool  
like running of the water.

\* \* \* \*

#### THE KHALIF'S JUDGMENT

They took us to a palace, to a chamber  
Smelling of bruised spice and burning amber.  
There slaves were sent to fetch the newly  
    risen  
Servants and warders of the woman's prison.  
The white of death was on them when they  
    came.

\* \* \* \*

The Khalif lightened on them with quick  
    flame.  
Harsh though she was, I sorrowed for the  
    crone,  
For she was old, a woman, and alone,  
And came, in age, upon disgrace through me;  
I know not what disgrace, I did not see  
Those crones again, I doubt not they were  
    whipt  
For letting us escape them while they slept.  
Perhaps they killed the sentry. Who can  
    tell?  
The devil ever keeps the laws in hell.

\* \* \* \*

They dragged them out to justice one by one.  
However bitter was the justice done,  
I doubt not they were thankful to be quit  
(At cost of some few pangs) the fear of it.  
Then our turn came.

The Khalif's fury raged  
Because our eyes had seen those women  
caged,  
Because our Christian presence had defiled  
The Women's House, and somehow had be-  
guiled  
A woman-slave, his victim, out of it,  
Against all Moorish law and Holy Writ.  
If we had killed his son it had been less.

\* \* \* \*

He rose up in his place and rent his dress.  
"Let them be ganchèd upon the hooks," he  
cried,  
"Throughout to-day, but not till they have  
died.  
Then gather all the slaves, and flay these  
three  
Alive, before them, that the slaves may see  
What comes to dogs who try to get away.  
So, ganch the three."

\* \* \* \*

Then Gerard answered: "Stay.  
Before you fling us to the hooks, hear this.

There are two laws, and men may go  
amiss

Either by breaking or by keeping one.

There is man's law by which man's work is  
done.

Your galleys rowed, your palace kept in  
state,

Your victims ganchéd or headed on the gate,  
And accident has bent us to its yoke.

\* \* \* \*

"We break it: death; but it is better broke.

\* \* \* \*

"You know, you Khalif, by what death you  
reign,

What force of fraud, what cruelty of pain,  
What spies and prostitutes support your  
power,

And help your law to run its little hour:  
We, who are but ourselves, defy it all.

\* \* \* \*

"We were free people till you made us thrall.

I was a sailor whom you took at sea

While sailing home. This woman that you  
see

You broke upon with murder in the night,  
To drag her here to die for your delight.

This young man is her lover.

When he knew  
That she was taken by your pirate crew,  
He followed her to save her, or at least  
Be near her in her grief. Man is a beast,  
And women are his pasture by your law.  
This young man was in safety, and he saw  
His darling taken to the slave-girls' pen  
Of weeping in the night and beasts of men.  
He gave up everything, risked everything,  
Came to your galley, took the iron ring,  
Rowed at the bitter oar-loom as a slave,  
Only for love of her, for hope to save  
Her from one bruise of all the many bruises  
That fall upon a woman when she loses  
Those whom your gang of bloodhounds made  
her lose.

\* \* \* \*

"Knowing another law, we could not choose  
But stamp your law beneath our feet as dust,  
Its bloodshed and its rapine and its lust,  
For one clean hour of struggle to be free;  
She for her passionate pride of chastity,  
He for his love of her, and I because  
I'm not too old to glory in the cause  
Of generous souls who have harsh measure  
meted.

\* \* \* \*

"We did the generous thing and are defeated.

Boast, then, to-night, when you have drunken deep,

Between the singing woman's song and sleep,  
That you have tortured to the death three slaves

Who spat upon your law and found their graves

Helping each other in the generous thing.  
No mighty triumph for a boast, O King."

\* \* \* \*

Then he was silent while the Khalif stared.  
Never before had any being dared  
To speak thus to him. All the courtiers  
paled.

We, who had died, expected to be haled  
To torture there and then before the crowd.  
It was so silent that the wind seemed loud  
Clicking a loose slat in the open shutter.  
I heard the distant breakers at their mutter  
Upon the Mole, I saw my darling's face  
Steady and proud; a breathing filled the  
place,

Men drawing breath until the Khalif spoke.

\* \* \* \*



His torn dress hung upon him like a cloak.  
He spoke at last. "You speak of law," he  
said.

"By climates and by soils the laws are made.  
Ours is a hawk-law suited to the land,  
This rock of hawks or eyrie among sand;  
I am a hawk, the hawk-law pleases me.

\* \* \* \*

"But I am man, and, being man, can be  
Moved, sometimes, Christian, by the law  
which makes  
Men who are suffering from man's mistakes  
Brothers sometimes.

I had not heard this tale  
Of you, the lover, following to jail  
The woman whom you loved. You bowed  
your neck  
Into the iron fettered to the deck,  
And followed her to prison, all for love?

\* \* \* \*

"Allah, who gives men courage from above,  
Has surely blessed you, boy.

\* \* \* \*

"And you, his queen;  
Without your love his courage had not been.

Your beauty and your truth prevailed on  
him.

Allah has blessed you, too.

\* \* \* \*

“And you, the grim  
Killer of men at midnight, you who speak  
To Kings as peers with colour in your cheek,  
Allah made you a man who helps his friends.

\* \* \* \*

“God made you all. I will not thwart his  
ends.

You shall be free.

Hear all. These folks are free.  
You, Emir, fit a xebec for the sea  
To let them sail at noon.

Go where you will.  
And lest my rovers should molest you still,  
Here is my seal that they shall let you pass.”

\* \* \* \*

Throughout the room a sudden murmur was,  
A gasp of indrawn breath and shifting feet.  
So life was given back, the thing so sweet,  
The undrunk cup that we were longing for.

\* \* \* \*

My darling spoke: "O Khalif, one gift more.  
After this bounty that our hearts shall praise  
At all our praying-times by nights and days,  
I ask yet more, O raiser from the dead.  
There in your woman's prison as we fled  
A hopeless woman blessed us. It is said  
That blessings from the broken truly bless.  
Khalif, we would not leave in hopelessness  
One whose great heart could bless us even  
then,

Even as we left her in the prison pen.  
She wished us fortune from a broken heart:  
Let her come with us, Khalif, when we start."  
"Go, you," the Khalif said, "and choose her  
forth."

\* \* \* \*

At noon the wind was blowing to the north;  
A swift felucca with a scarlet sail  
Was ready for us, deep with many a bale  
Of gold and spice and silk, the great King's  
gifts.

The banners of the King were on her lifts.  
The King and all his court rode down to see  
Us four glad souls put seawards from Saffee.

\* \* \* \*

In the last glowing of the sunset's gold  
We looked our last upon that pirate hold;

The palace gilding shone awhile like fire,  
We were at sea with all our heart's desire,  
Beauty and friendship and the dream fulfilled:

The golden answer to the deeply willed,  
The purely longed-for, hardly tried-for thing.

Into the dark our sea-boat dipped her wing;  
Polaris climbed out of the dark and shone,  
Then came the moon, and now Saffee was gone,  
With all hell's darkness hidden by the sea.

\* \* \* \*

Oh, beautiful is love, and to be free  
Is beautiful, and beautiful are friends.  
Love, freedom, comrades, surely make amends  
For all these thorns through which we walk to death!  
God let us breathe your beauty with our breath.

\* \* \* \*

All early in the Maytime, when daylight comes at four,  
We blessed the hawthorn blossom that welcomed us ashore.

Oh, beautiful in this living that passes like  
the foam,  
It is to go with sorrow, yet come with beauty  
home!

\* \* \* \*

### THE HOUNDS OF HELL

About the crowing of the cock,  
When the shepherds feel the cold,  
A horse's hoofs went clip-a-clock  
Along the hangman's wold.

The horse-hoofs trotted on the stone,  
The hoof-sparks glittered by,  
And then a hunting horn was blown  
And hounds broke into cry.

There was a strangeness in the horn,  
A wildness in the cry,  
A power of devilry forlorn  
Exulting bloodily.

A power of night that ran a prey  
Along the hangman's hill.  
The shepherds heard the spent buck bray  
And the horn blow for the kill.

They heard the worrying of the hounds  
About the dead beast's bones;

Then came the horn, and then the sounds  
Of horse-hoofs treading stones.

"What hounds are these that hunt the  
night?"

The shepherds asked in fear.

"Look, there are calkins clinking bright;  
They must be coming here."

The calkins clinkered to a spark,  
The hunter called the pack;  
The sheep-dogs' fells all bristled stark  
And all their lips went back.

"Lord God!" the shepherds said, "they come;  
And see what hounds he has:  
All dripping bluish fire, and dumb,  
And nosing to the grass,

"And trotting scatheless through the gorse,  
And bristling in the fell.  
Lord, it is Death upon the horse,  
And they're the hounds of hell!"

They shook to watch them as they sped,  
All black against the sky;  
A horseman with a hooded head  
And great hounds padding by.

When daylight drove away the dark  
And larks went up and thrilled,

The shepherds climbed the wold to mark  
What beast the hounds had killed.

They came to where the hounds had fed,  
And in that trampled place  
They found a pedlar lying dead,  
With horror in his face.

\* \* \* \*

There was a farmer on the wold  
Where all the brooks begin,  
He had a thousand sheep from fold  
Out grazing on the whin.

The next night, as he lay in bed,  
He heard a canterer come  
Trampling the wold-top with a tread  
That sounded like a drum.

He thought it was a post that rode,  
So turned him to his sleep;  
But the canterer in his dream abode  
Like horse-hoofs running sheep.

And in his dreams a horn was blown  
And feathering hounds replied,  
And all his wethers stood like stone  
In rank on the hillside.

Then, while he struggled still with dreams,  
He saw his wethers run

Before a pack cheered on with screams,  
The thousand sheep as one.

So, leaping from his bed in fear,  
He flung the window back,  
And he heard a death-horn blowing clear  
And the crying of a pack,

And the thundering of a thousand sheep,  
All mad and running wild  
To the stone-pit seven fathoms deep,  
Whence all the town is tiled.

After them came the hounds of hell,  
With hell's own fury filled;  
Into the pit the wethers fell,  
And all but three were killed.

The hunter blew his horn a note  
And laughed against the moon;  
The farmer's breath caught in his throat,  
He fell into a swoon.

\* \* \* \*

The next night when the watch was set  
A heavy rain came down,  
The leaden gutters dripped with wet  
Into the shuttered town.

So close the shutters were, the chink  
Of lamplight scarcely showed;



The men at fireside heard no clink  
Of horse-hoofs on the road.

They heard the creaking hinge complain,  
And the mouse that gnawed the floor,  
And the limping footsteps of the rain  
On the stone outside the door.

And on the wold the rain came down  
Till trickles streakt the grass:  
A traveller riding to the town  
Drew rein to let it pass.

The wind sighed in the fir-tree tops,  
The trickles sobb'd in the grass,  
The branches ran with showers of drops:  
No other noise there was.

Till up the wold the traveller heard  
A horn blow faint and thin;  
He thought it was the curlew bird  
Lamenting to the whin;

And when the far horn blew again,  
He thought an owl hallooed,  
Or a rabbit gave a shriek of pain  
As the stoat leapt in the wood.

But when the horn blew next, it blew  
A trump that split the air,

And hounds gave cry to an Halloo!  
The hunt of hell was there.

"Black" (said the traveller), "black and  
swift.

Those running devils came;  
Scoring to cry with hackles stiff,  
And grin-jowls dropping flame."

They settled to the sightless scent,  
And up the hill a cry  
Told where the frightened quarry went,  
Well knowing it would die.

Then presently a cry rang out,  
And a mort blew for the kill;  
A shepherd with his throat torn out  
Lay dead upon the hill.

\* \* \* \*

When this was known, the shepherds drove  
Their flocks into the town;  
No man, for money or for love,  
Would watch them on the down.

But night by night the terror ran,  
The townsmen heard them still;  
Nightly the hell-hounds hunted man  
And the hunter whooped the kill.

The men who lived upon the moor  
Would waken to the scratch  
Of hounds' claws digging at the door  
Or scraping at the latch.

And presently no man would go  
Without doors after dark,  
Lest hell's black hunting horn should blow,  
And hell's black bloodhounds mark.

They shivered round the fire at home,  
While out upon the bent  
The hounds with black jowls dropping foam  
Went nosing to the scent.

Men let the hay crop run to seed  
And the corn crop sprout in ear,  
And the root crop choke itself in weed,  
That hell-hound hunting year.

Empty to heaven lay the wold,  
Village and church grew green;  
The courtyard flagstones spread with mould,  
And weeds sprang up between.

And sometimes when the cock had crowed,  
And the hillside stood out grey,  
Men saw them slinking up the road  
All sullen from their prey.

A hooded horseman on a black,  
With nine black hounds at heel,  
After the hell-hunt going back  
All bloody from their meal.

And in men's minds a fear began  
That hell had over-hurled  
The guardians of the soul of man,  
And come to rule the world.

With bitterness of heart by day,  
And terror in the night,  
And the blindness of a barren way  
And withering of delight.

\* \* \* \*

St. Withiel lived upon the moor,  
Where the peat-men live in holes;  
He worked among the peat-men poor,  
Who only have their souls.

He brought them nothing but his love  
And the will to do them good,  
But power filled him from above.  
His very touch was food.

Men told St. Withiel of the hounds,  
And how they killed their prey.  
He thought them far beyond his bounds,  
So many miles away.

Then one whose son the hounds had killed  
Told him the tale at length;  
St. Withiel pondered why God willed  
That hell should have such strength.

Then one, a passing traveller, told  
How since the hounds had come,  
The church was empty on the wold,  
And all the priests were dumb.

St. Withiel rose at this, and said:  
"This priest will not be dumb;  
My spirit will not be afraid  
Though all hell's devils come."

He took his stick and out he went,  
The long way to the wold,  
Where the sheep-bells clink upon the bent  
And every wind is cold.

He passed the rivers running red  
And the mountains standing bare;  
At last the wold-land lay ahead,  
Un-yellowed by the share.

All in the brown October time  
He clambered to the weald;  
The plum lay purpled into slime,  
The harvest lay in field.

Trampled by many-footed rain  
The sunburnt corn lay dead;  
The myriad finches in the grain  
Rose bothering at his tread.

The myriad finches took a sheer  
And settled back to food:  
A man was not a thing to fear  
In such a solitude.

The hurrying of their wings died out,  
A silence took the hill;  
There was no dog, no bell, no shout,  
The windmill's sails were still.

The gate swung creaking on its hasp,  
The pear splashed from the tree,  
In the rotting apple's heart the wasp  
Was drunken drowsily.

The grass upon the cart-wheel ruts  
Had made the trackways dim;  
The rabbits ate and hopped their scuts,  
They had no fear of him.

The sunset reddened in the west;  
The distant depth of blue  
Stretched out and dimmed; to twiggy nest  
The rooks in clamour drew.

The oakwood in his mail of brass  
    Bowed his great crest and stood;  
The pine-tree saw St. Withiel pass,  
    His great bole blushed like blood.

Then tree and wood alike were dim,  
    Yet still St. Withiel strode;  
The only noise to comfort him  
    Were his footsteps on the road.

The crimson in the west was smoked,  
    The west wind heaped the wrack,  
Each tree seemed like a murderer cloaked  
    To stab him in the back.

Darkness and desolation came  
    To dog his footsteps there;  
The dead leaves rustling called his name,  
    The death-moth brushed his hair.

The murmurings of the wind fell still;  
    He stood and stared around:  
He was alone upon the hill,  
    On devil-haunted ground.

What was the whitish thing which stood  
    In front, with one arm raised,  
Like death a-grinning in a hood?  
    The saint stood still and gazed.

"What are you?" said St. Withiel. "Speak!"  
Not any answer came  
But the night-wind making darkness bleak,  
And the leaves that called his name.

A glow shone on the whitish thing,  
It neither stirred nor spoke:  
In spite of faith, a shuddering  
Made the good saint to choke.

He struck the whiteness with his staff—  
It was a withered tree;  
An owl flew from it with a laugh,  
The darkness shook with glee.

The darkness came all round him close  
And cackled in his ear;  
The midnight, full of life none knows,  
Was very full of fear.

The darkness cackled in his heart  
That things of hell were there,  
That the startled rabbit played a part  
And the stoat's leap did prepare—

Prepare the stage for night of blood,  
And the mind of night for death,  
For a spirit trembling in the mud  
In an agony for breath.



A terror came upon the saint,  
It stripped his spirit bare;  
He was sick body standing faint,  
Cold sweat and stiffened hair.

He took his terror by the throat  
And stamped it underfoot;  
Then, far away, the death-horn's note  
Quailed like a screech-owl's hoot.

Still far away that devil's horn  
Its quavering death-note blew,  
But the saint could hear the crackling thorn  
That the hounds trod as they drew.

"Lord, it is true," St. Withiel moaned,  
"And the hunt is drawing near!  
Devils that Paradise disowned,  
They know that I am here.

"And there, O God, a hound gives tongue,  
And great hounds quarter dim"—  
The saint's hands to his body clung,  
He knew they came for him.

Then close at hand the horn was loud,  
Like Peter's cock of old,  
For joy that Peter's soul was cowed,  
And Jesus' body sold.

Then terribly the hounds in cry  
Gave answer to the horn;  
The saint in terror turned to fly  
Before his flesh was torn.

After his body came the hounds,  
After the hounds the horse;  
Their running crackled with the sounds  
Of fire that runs in gorse.

The saint's breath failed, but still they came:  
The hunter cheered them on,  
Even as a wind that blows a flame  
In the vigil of St. John.

And as St. Withiel's terror grew,  
The crying of the pack  
Bayed nearer, as though terror drew  
Those grip teeth to his back.

No hope was in his soul, no stay,  
Nothing but screaming will  
To save his terror-stricken clay  
Before the hounds could kill.

The laid corn tripped, the bramble caught,  
He stumbled on the stones;  
The thorn that scratched him, to his thought,  
Was hell's teeth at his bones.

His legs seemed bound as in a dream,  
The wet earth held his feet,  
He screamed aloud as rabbits scream  
Before the stoat's teeth meet.

A black thing struck him on the brow,  
A blackness loomed and waved;  
It was a tree—he caught a bough  
And scrambled up it, saved.

Saved for the moment, as he thought,  
He pressed against the bark:  
The hell-hounds missed the thing they  
sought,  
They quartered in the dark.

They panted underneath the tree,  
They quartered to the call;  
The hunter cried: "Yoi doit, go see!"  
His death-horn blew a fall.

Now up, now down, the hell-hounds went  
With soft feet padding wide;  
They tried, but could not hit the scent,  
However hard they tried.

Then presently the horn was blown,  
The hounds were called away;  
The hoof-beats glittered on the stone  
And trotted on the brae.

\* \* \* \*

The saint gat strength, but with it came  
A horror of his fear,  
Anguish at having failed, and shame,  
And sense of judgment near:

Anguish at having left his charge  
And having failed his trust,  
At having flung his sword and targe  
To save his body's dust.

He clambered down the saving tree.  
"I am unclean!" he cried.  
"Christ died upon a tree for me,  
I used a tree to hide.

"The hell-hounds bayed about the cross,  
And tore his clothes apart;  
But Christ was gold, and I am dross,  
And mud is in my heart."

He stood in anguish in the field;  
A little wind blew by,  
The dead leaves dropped, the great stars  
wheeled  
Their squadrons in the sky.

\* \* \* \*

"Lord, I will try again," he said,  
"Though all hell's devils tear.  
This time I will not be afraid,  
And what is sent I'll dare."

He set his face against the slope  
Until he topped the brae;  
Courage had healed his fear, and hope  
Had put his shame away.

And then, far-off, a quest-note ran,  
A feathering hound replied:  
The hounds still drew the night for man  
Along that countryside.

Then one by one the hell-hounds spoke,  
And still the horn made cheer;  
Then the full devil-chorus woke  
To fill the saint with fear.

He knew that they were after him  
To hunt him till he fell;  
He turned and fled into the dim,  
And after him came hell.

Over the stony wold he went,  
Through thorns and over quags;  
The bloodhounds cried upon the scent,  
They ran like rutting stags.

And when the saint looked round, he saw  
Red eyes intently strained,  
The bright teeth in the grinning jaw,  
And running shapes that gained.

Uphill, downhill, with failing breath,  
He ran to save his skin,  
Like one who knocked the door of death,  
Yet dared not enter in.

Then water gurgled in the night,  
Dark water lay in front,  
The saint saw bubbles running bright;  
The huntsman cheered his hunt.

The saint leaped far into the stream  
And struggled to the shore.  
The hunt died like an evil dream,  
A strange land lay before.

He waded to a glittering land,  
With brighter light than ours;  
The water ran on silver sand  
By yellow water-flowers.

The fishes nosed the stream to rings  
As petals floated by,  
The apples were like orbs of kings  
Against a glow of sky.

On cool and steady stalks of green  
The outland flowers grew.  
The ghost-flower, silver like a queen,  
The queen-flower streakt with blue.

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The king-flower, crimson on his stalk,  
With frettings in his crown;  
The peace-flower, purple, from the chalk,  
The flower that loves the down.

Lilies like thoughts, roses like words,  
In the sweet brain of June;  
The bees there, like the stock-dove birds,  
Breathed all the air with croon.

Purple and golden hung the plums;  
Like slaves bowed down with gems  
The peach-trees were; sweet-scented gums  
Oozed clammy from their stems.

And birds of every land were there,  
Like flowers that sang and flew;  
All beauty that makes singing fair  
That sunny garden knew.

For all together sang with throats  
So tuned, that the intense  
Colour and odour pearled the notes  
And passed into the sense.

And as the saint drew near, he heard  
The birds talk, each to each,  
The fire-bird to the glory-bird.  
He understood their speech.

One said: "The saint was terrified  
Because the hunters came."  
Another said: "The bloodhounds cried,  
And all their eyes were flame."

Another said: "No shame to him,  
For mortal men are blind:  
They cannot see beyond the grim  
Into the peace behind."

Another sang: "They cannot know,  
Unless we give the clue,  
The power that waits in them below  
The things they are and do."

Another sang: "They never guess  
That deep within them stand  
Courage and peace and loveliness,  
Wisdom and skill of hand."

Another said: "Sing, brothers! come,  
Make beauty in the air!  
The saint is shamed with martyrdom  
Beyond his strength to bear."

"Sing, brothers! every bird that flies!"  
They stretcht their throats to sing,  
With the sweetness known in Paradise  
When the bells of heaven ring.



**"Open the doors, good saint!" they cried,  
Pass deeper to your soul;  
There is a spirit in your side  
That hell cannot control.**

**"Open the doors to let him in,  
That beauty with the sword;  
The hounds are silly shapes of sin,  
That shrivel at a word.**

**"Come, saint!" and as they sang, the air  
Shone with the shapes of flame,  
Bird after bright bird glittered there,  
Crying aloud they came.**

**A rush of brightness and delight,  
White as the snow in drift,  
The fire-bird and the glory-bright,  
Most beautiful, most swift.**

**Sweeping aloft to show the way,  
And singing as they flew,  
Many and glittering as the spray  
When windy seas are blue.**

**So cheerily they rushed, so strong  
Their sweep was through the flowers,  
The saint was swept into their song  
And gloried in their powers.**

He sang, and leaped into the stream,  
And struggled to the shore;  
The garden faded like a dream,  
A darkness lay before.

Darkness with glimmery light forlorn  
And quavering hounds in quest,  
A huntsman blowing on a horn,  
And lost things not at rest.

He saw the huntsman's hood show black  
Against the greying east;  
He heard him hollo to the pack  
And horn them to the feast.

He heard the bloodhounds come to cry  
And settle to the scent;  
The black horse made the hoof-casts fly,  
The sparks flashed up the bent.

The saint stood still until they came  
Baying to ring him round:  
A horse whose flecking foam was flame,  
And hound on yelling hound.

And jaws that dripped with bitter fire  
Snarled at the saint to tear.  
Pilled hell-hounds, balder than the geier,  
Leaped round him everywhere.

St. Whithiel let the hell-hounds rave.

He cried: "Now, in this place,  
Climb down, you huntsman of the grave.  
And let me see your face.

"Climb down, you huntsman out of hell,  
And show me what you are.  
The judge has stricken on the bell,  
Now answer at the bar."

The baying of the hounds fell still,  
Their jaws' salt fire died.  
The wind of morning struck in chill  
Along that countryside.

The blackness of the horse was shrunk,  
His sides seemed ribbed and old.  
The rider, hooded like a monk,  
Was trembling with the cold.

The rider bowed as though with pain;  
Then clambered down and stood,  
The thin thing that the frightened brain  
Had fed with living blood.

"Show me. What are you?" said the saint.  
A hollow murmur spoke.  
"This, Lord," it said; a hand moved faint  
And drew aside the cloak.

A Woman Death that palsy shook  
    Stood sick and dwindling there;  
Her fingers were a bony crook,  
    And blood was on her hair.

“Stretch out your hands and sign the Cross,”  
    Was all St. Withiel said.  
The bloodhounds moaned upon the moss,  
    The Woman Death obeyed.

Whimpering with pain, she made the sign.  
    “Go, devilhag,” said he,  
“Beyond all help of bread and wine,  
    Beyond all land and sea,

“Into the ice, into the snow,  
    Where Death himself is stark!  
Out, with your hounds about you, go,  
    And perish in the dark!”

They dwindled as the mist that fades  
    At coming of the sun;  
Like rags of stuff that fire abrades  
    They withered and were done.

The cock, that scares the ghost from earth,  
    Crowed as they dwindled down;  
The red sun, happy in his girth,  
    Strode up above the town.

Sweetly above the sunny wold  
The bells of churches rang;  
The sheep-bells clinked within the fold,  
And the larks went up and sang;

Sang for the setting free of men  
From devils that destroyed;  
The lark, the robin, and the wren,  
They joyed and overjoyed.

The chats that harbour in the whin,  
Their little sweet throats swelled,  
The blackbird and the thrush joined in,  
The missel-thrush excelled.

Till round the saint the singing made  
A beauty in the air,  
An ecstasy that cannot fade  
But is for ever there.

## ANIMULA

This is the place, this house beside the sea;  
This was the setting where they played their  
parts.  
Two men, who knew them all, have talked to  
me:  
Beauty she had, and all had passionate hearts.

I write this in the window where she sat.  
Two fields, all green with summer, lie below;  
Then the grey sea, at thought, cloud-coloured,  
flat,  
Wind-dappled from the glen, the tide at flow.  
Her portrait and her husband's hang together  
One on each side the fire; it is close;  
The tree-tops toss, it is a change of weather.  
They were most lovely and unhappy, those,  
That married pair and he who loved too well;  
This was the door by which they entered hell.

This is a drawing of her as a child,  
This is she wed; the faces are the same,  
Only the beauty of the babe is wild,  
The woman's beauty has been broken tame.  
Witty, bright, gentle, earnest, with great  
eyes,  
Dark hair in heaps, pure colour, lips that  
smile;  
Beauty that is more wisdom than the wise  
Lived in this woman for a little while.  
Dressed in that beauty that our mothers wore  
(So touching now), she looks out of the frame  
With stag-like eyes, that wept till they were  
sore  
Many's the time, till she was broken tame.  
Witty, bright, gentle, earnest, even so,  
Destiny calls and spirits come and go.

This is her husband in his youth; and this  
Is he in manhood; this is he in age.  
There is a devil in those eyes of his,  
A glittering devil, restless in his cage.  
A grand man, with a beauty and a pride,  
A manner and a power and a fire,  
With beaks of vultures eating at his side,  
The great brain mad with unfulfilled desire.  
"With grand ideas," they say; tall, wicked,  
proud,  
Cold, cruel, bitter, clever, dainty, skilled;  
Splendid to see, a head above the crowd;  
Splendid with every strength, yet unfulfilled.  
Cutting himself (and all those near) with  
hate  
From that sharp mind which should have  
shaped a state.

And many years ago I saw the third  
Bowed in old age and mad with misery;  
Mad with the bright eyes of the eagle-bird,  
Burning his heart at fires of memory.  
He stood behind a chair, and bent and  
muttered;  
Grand still, grey, sunburnt, bright with mad  
eyes brown,  
Burning, though dying, like a torch that  
guttered,

That once had lit Queen Helen through the  
town.

I only saw him once: I saw him go  
Leaning uphill his body to the rain,  
Too good a man for life to punish so,  
Theirs were the pride and passion, his the  
pain.

His old coat flapped; the little children  
turned  
To see him pass, that passionate age that  
burned.

"I knew them well, all three," the old man  
said;

"He was an unused force, and she a child.  
She caught him with her beauty, being a  
maid.

The thought that she had trapped him drove  
him wild.

He would not work with others, could not  
rest,

And nothing here could use him or engage  
him;

Yet here he stayed, with devils in his breast,  
To blast the woman who had dared to cage  
him.

Then, when the scholar came, it made the  
three:

She turned to him, and he, he turned to her.



Thy were both saints: elopement could not  
be;  
So here they stayed, and passion plied the  
spur.  
Then the men fought, and later she was  
found  
In that green pool beyond the headland,  
drowned.

"They carried her drowned body up the grass  
Here to the house; they laid it on the bed  
(This very bed, where I have slept, it was).  
The scholar begged to see her, being dead.  
The husband walked downstairs, to see him  
there

Begging to see her as one asks an alms.  
He spat at him and cut his cheek-bone bare.  
'There's pay,' he said, 'my poet, for your  
psalms.'

And then they fought together at the door,  
Biting each other, like two dogs, while she  
Lay dead, poor woman, dripping on the floor  
Out of her hair the death-drops of the sea.  
Later, they fought whenever they might meet,  
In church, or in the fields, or in the street."

Up on the hill another aged man  
Remembered them. He said: "They were  
afraid;  
They feared to end the passions they began.

They held the cards, and yet they never  
played.

He should have broken from her at all cost;  
She should have loved her lover and gone  
free.

They all held winning cards, and yet they  
lost;

So two were wrecked and one crowned in  
the sea.

Some harshness or some law, or else some fear  
Stifled their souls; God help us! when we  
know

Certainly, certain things, the way is clear.  
And yet they paid, and one respects them so.  
Perhaps they were too fine. I know not, I.  
Men must have mercy, being ripe to die."

So this old house of mourning was the stage  
(This house and those green fields) for all  
that woe.

There are her books, her writing on the page;  
In those choked beds she made the flowers  
grow.

Most desolate it is, the rain is pouring,  
The trees all toss and drip and scatter evil,  
The floods are out, the waterfall is roaring,  
The bar is mad with many a leaping devil.  
And in this house the wind goes whining  
wild,

The door blows open, till I think to see  
That delicate sweet woman, like a child,  
Standing with great dark stag's eyes watch-  
ing me;  
Watching as though her sorrow might make  
plain  
(Had I but wit) the meaning of such pain.

I wonder if she sang in this old room.  
Ah, never! No; they tell me that she stood  
For hours together staring into gloom  
Out of the prison bars of flesh and blood.  
So, when the ninth wave drowned her, haply  
she  
Wakened, with merging senses, till she blent  
Into the joy and colour of the sea,  
One with the purpose of the element.  
And there, perhaps, she cannot feel the woe  
Passed in this rotting house, but runs like  
light  
Over the billows where the clippers go,  
One with the blue sea's pureness of delight;  
Laughing, perhaps, at that old woe of hers  
Chained in the cage with fellow-prisoners.

He died in that lone cottage near the sea.  
In the grey morning when the tide was  
turning,  
The wards of life slipt back and set him free

From cares of meat and dress, from joys and  
yearning.

Then like an old man gathering strength, he  
strayed

Over the beach, and strength came into him,  
Beauty that never threatened nor betrayed  
Made bright the eyes that sorrow had made  
dim;

So that upon that stretch of barren sand  
He knew his dreams; he saw her beauty run  
With Sorrowful Beauty, laughing, hand in  
hand;

He heard the trumpets blow in Avalon.  
He saw the golden statue stretching down  
The wreath, for him, of roses, in a crown.

They say that as her husband lay a-dying  
He clamoured for a chain to beat the hound.  
They say that all the garden rang with crying  
That came out of the air, out of the ground,  
Out of the waste that was his soul, maybe,  
Out of the running wolf-hound of his soul,  
That had been kennelled in and now broke  
free

Out to the moors where stags go, past control.  
All through his life his will had kennelled  
him;

Now he was free, and with a hackling fell  
He snarled out of the body to the dim,

To run the spirits with the hounds of hell;  
To run forever at the quarry gone,  
The uncaught thing a little further on.

So, one by one, Time took them to his  
    keeping,  
Those broken lanterns that had held his fire;  
Dust went to dust, and flesh had time for  
    sleeping,  
And soul the stag escaped the hound desire.  
And now, perhaps, the memory of their hate  
Has passed from them, and they are friends  
    again,  
Laughing at all the trouble of this state  
Where men and women work each other pain.  
And in the wind that runs along the glen  
Beating at cottage doors, they may go by,  
Exulting now, and helping sorrowing men  
To do some little good before they die.  
For from these ploughed-up souls the spirit  
    brings  
Harvest at last, and sweet from bitter things.

## FORGET

Forget all these, the barren fool in power,  
The madman in command, the jealous O,  
The bitter world biting its bitter hour,  
The cruel now, the happy long ago.

Forget all these, for, though they truly hurt,  
Even to the soul, they are not lasting things:  
Men are no gods; we tread the city dirt,  
But in our souls we can be queens and kings.

And I, O Beauty, O divine white wonder,  
On whom my dull eyes, blind to all else, peer,  
Have you for peace, that not the whole war's  
thunder,  
Nor the world's wreck, can threat or take  
from here.

So you remain, though all man's passionate  
seas  
Roar their blind tides, I can forget all these.

### ON GROWING OLD

Be with me, Beauty, for the fire is dying;  
My dog and I are old, too old for roving.  
Man, whose young passion sets the spindrift  
flying,  
Is soon too lame to march, too cold for loving.  
I take the book and gather to the fire,  
Turning old yellow leaves; minute by minute  
The clock ticks to my heart. A withered  
wire,

Moves a thin ghost of music in the spinet.  
I cannot sail your seas, I cannot wander  
Your cornland, nor your hill-land, nor your  
valleys

Ever again, nor share the battle yonder  
Where the young knight the broken squadron  
rallies.

Only stay quiet while my mind remembers  
The beauty of fire from the beauty of em-  
bers.

Beauty, have pity! for the strong have power,  
The rich their wealth, the beautiful their  
grace,

Summer of man its sunlight and its flower,  
Spring-time of man all April in a face.  
Only, as in the jostling in the Strand,  
Where the mob thrusts or loiters or is loud,  
The beggar with the saucer in his hand  
Asks only a penny from the passing crowd,  
So, from this glittering world with all its  
fashion,

Its fire, and play of men, its stir, its march,  
Let me have wisdom, Beauty, wisdom and  
passion,

Bread to the soul, rain where the summers  
parch.

Give me but these, and, though the darkness  
close,

Even the night will blossom as the rose.

*Selections from*  
**RIGHT ROYAL**

As a whirl of notes running in a fugue that  
men play,  
And the thundering follows as the pipe flits  
away,  
And the laughter comes after and the haut-  
boys begin,  
So they ran at the hurdle and scattered the  
whin.  
As they leaped to the race-course the sun  
burst from cloud,  
And like tumult in dream came the roar of  
the crowd.

For to right and to left, now, were crowded  
men yelling,  
And a great cry boomed backward like muf-  
fled bells knelling,  
And a surge of men running seemed to follow  
the race,  
The horses all trembled and quickened their  
pace.

As the porpoise, grown weary of his rush  
through the dim  
Of the unlitte silence where the swiftesses  
swim,



Learns at sudden the tumult of a clipper  
bound home  
And exults with this playmate and leaps in  
her foam,

Or as nightingales coming into England in  
May,  
Coming songless at sunset, being worn with  
the way,  
Settle spent in the twilight, drooping head  
under wing,  
Yet are glad when the dark comes, while at  
moonrise they sing;

Or as fire on a hillside, by happy boys kindled,  
That has burnt black a heath-tuft, scorcht a  
bramble, and dwindled,  
Blown by wind yet arises in a wave of flogged  
flame,  
So the souls of those horses to the testing  
time came.

Now they closed on their leaders, and the  
running increased,  
They rushed down the arc curving round to  
the east;  
All the air rang with roaring, all the peopled  
loud stands  
Roared aloud from tense faces, shook with  
hats and waved hands.

So they cleared the green gorse-bush by  
bursting it through,  
There was no time for thinking, there was  
scarce time to do.  
Charles gritted his spirit as he charged  
through the gorse:  
"You must just grin and suffer; sit still on  
your horse."

There in front was a hurdle and the Distance  
Post white,  
And the long, green, broad Straight washed  
with wind and blown bright;  
Now the roaring had screaming, bringing  
names to their ears:  
"Come, Soyland!" "Sir Lopez!" Then cat-  
calls; then cheers.

"Sir Lopez! Sir Lopez!" then the jiggling  
brass laughter  
From the yellow toss't swing-boats swooping  
rafter to rafter.  
Then the blare of all organs, then the roar of  
all throats,  
And they shot past the side shows, the horses  
and boats.

Now the Wants of the Watchers whirled into  
the race  
Like flames in their fury, like men in the face,

Mad-red from the wanting that made them  
    alive,  
They fought with those horses or helped them  
    to strive.

Like leaves blown on Hudson when maples  
    turn gold,  
They whirled in their colour, they clutched to  
    catch hold,  
They sang to the riders, they smote at their  
    hearts  
Like flakes of live fire, like castings of darts.

As a snow in Wisconsin when the darkness  
    comes down,  
Running white on the prairie, making all the  
    air brown,  
Blinding men with the hurry of its millions  
    of feet,  
So the Wants pelted on them, so they blinded  
    and beat.

And like spirits calm shining upon horses of  
    flame,  
Came the Friends of those riders to shield  
    them from shame,  
White as fire white-burning, rushing each by  
    his friend,  
Singing songs of the glory of the world with-  
    out end;

And as men in Wisconsin driving cars in the  
snow

Butt against its impulsion and face to the blow,  
Tossing snow from their bonnets as a ship  
tosses foam,

So the Friend tossed the Wantings as they  
brought their friends home.

Now they charged the last hurdle that led to  
the Straight,

Charles longing to ride, though his spirit  
said "Wait."

He came to his horses as they came to the  
leap,

Eight hard-driven horses, eight men breath-  
ing deep.

On the left, as he leaped it, a flashing of  
brown

Kicking white on the grass, showed that  
Thankful was down;

Then a glance, right and left, showed that,  
barring all flukes,

It was Soyland's, Sir Lopez', or Peter-  
kinooks'.

He passed the Red Ember, he came to the  
flank

Of Peterkinooks, whom he reached and then  
sank.

There were only two others, going level alone,  
First the spotted cream jacket, then the blue,  
white and roan.

Up the street of green race-course they  
strained for the prize,  
While the stands blurred with waving and  
the air shook with cries:  
"Now, Sir Lopez!" "Come, Soyland!"  
"Now, Sir Lopez! Now, now!"  
Then Charles judged his second, but he could  
not tell how.

But a glory of sureness leaped from horse  
into man,  
And the man said, "Now, beauty," and the  
horse said, "I can."  
And the long weary Royal made an effort the  
more,  
Though his heart thumped like drum-beats  
as he went to the fore.

Neck and neck went Sir Lopez and Soyland  
together,  
Soyland first, a short head, with his neck all  
in lather;  
Both were ridden their hardest, both were  
doing their best,  
Right Royal reached Soyland and came to  
his chest.

There Soyland's man saw him with the heel  
of his eye,  
A horse with an effort that could beat him  
or tie;  
Then he glanced at Sir Lopez, and he bit  
through his lip,  
And he drove in his spurs and he took up his  
whip.

There he lashed the game Soyland who had  
given his all,  
And he gave three strides more, and then  
failed at the call,  
And he dropped behind Royal like a leaf in  
a tide:  
Then Sir Lopez and Royal ran on side by side.

There they looked at each other, and they  
rode, and were grim;  
Charles thought, "That's Sir Lopez. I shall  
never beat him."  
All the yells for Sir Lopez seemed to darken  
the air,  
They were rushing past Emmy and the White  
Post was there.

He drew to Sir Lopez; but Sir Lopez drew  
clear;  
Right Royal clung to him and crept to his ear.

Then the man on Sir Lopez judged the moment had come

For the last ounce of effort that would bring his horse home.

So he picked up his whip for three swift slashing blows,

And Sir Lopez drew clear, but Right Royal stuck close,

Then he gained, past his withers, past his neck to his head.

With Sir Lopez' man lashing, Charles still, seeing red.

So they rushed for one second, then Sir Lopez shot out:

Charles thought, 'There, he's done me, without any doubt.

Oh, come now, Right Royal!"

And Sir Lopez changed feet

And his ears went back level; Sir Lopez was beat.

Right Royal went past him, half an inch, half a head,

Half a neck, he was leading, for an instant he led;

Then a hooped black and coral flew up like a shot,

With a lightning-like effort from little Gavotte.

The little bright mare, made of nerves and  
steel springs,  
Shot level beside him, shot ahead as with  
wings.

Charles felt his horse quicken, felt the desperate  
beat  
Of the blood in his body from his knees to  
his feet.

Three terrible strides brought him up to the  
mare,  
Then they rushed to wild shouting through  
a whirl of blow air;  
Then Gavotte died to nothing; Soyland came  
once again  
Till his muzzle just reached to the knot on  
his rein.

Then a whirl of urged horses thundered  
up, whipped and blown,  
Soyland, Peterkinooks, and Red Ember the  
roan.

For an instant they challenged, then they  
drooped and were done;  
Then the White Post shot backwards, Right  
Royal had won.

Won a half length from Soyland, Red Ember  
close third;  
Fourth, Peterkinooks; fifth, Gavotte, harshly  
spurred;



Sixth, Sir Lopez, whose rider said, "Just at  
the Straight

He swerved at the hurdle and twisted a  
plate."

Then the numbers went up; then John Hard-  
ing appeared

To lead in the Winner while the bookmakers  
cheered.

Then the riders weighed-in, and the meeting  
was over,

And bright Emy Crowthorne could go with  
her lover.

Charles married his lady, but he rode no more  
races;

He lives on the Downland on the blown  
grassy places,

Where he and Right Royal can canter for  
hours

On the flock-bitten turf full of tiny blue  
flowers.

There the Roman pitcht camp, there the  
Saxon kept sheep,

There he lives out his Living that no man  
can keep,

That is manful but a moment before it must  
pass,

Like the stars sweeping westward, like the  
wind on the grass.

*Selections from*  
**ESTHER**

CHORUS.

In the troubled dreams a slave has, ere I  
waken

I can see my city shining as of old,  
Roof and column of the Temple wreathed  
in gold;

And the ramparts proud as erst, before the  
town was taken,

And the well-loved living shapes that now  
are cold.

Then I wake, a slave, and houseless and for-  
saken,

Chained, an outcast, and a chattel, bought  
and sold.

Now, for us, no future but the corn-mill and  
the stranger

In the foeman's house for ever.

And the cold eyes of a master and the cruel  
eyes of danger,

And the memory of joys returning never.

We who once were dainty ones and splendid,  
Now are slaves who grind the mill beneath  
a master's blows;

Would that when our fathers ended, we had  
ended,  
That we lay in Zion's soil, at peace with  
those.

ALL.

O lamentation, misery, woe, woe!

Here, from our prison gate, we see again  
The never-ending sand, the Persian plain,  
The long, long road, the stones that we  
should tread

Were we but free, to our beloved dead.  
And in the Spring the birds fly to the west  
Over these deserts that the mountains hem,  
They fly to our dear land; they fly to nest;  
We cannot go with them.

And in Springtime from the windows of the  
tower

I can see the wild horses in the plain,  
Treading stately but so lightly that they  
never break the flower,  
And they fade at speed to westward and  
they never come again.

And in Springtime at the quays the men of  
Tyre  
Set their ships towards the west and hoist  
their sail,

And our hearts cry "Take us with you to the  
land of our desire!"

And they hear our cry but will not take the  
crier:

The crying of a slave can be of no avail.

Birds, horses, sailors, all are free to go  
To seek their homes beyond the wilderness:  
But we, the homeless, only know  
Weariful days of wearing-out distress.

O lamentation, misery, woe, woe!

Shall we be ever exiled, must it be  
That we must pass our days as slaves for  
ever?

Far from our pleasant land, and never see  
Our sacred Hills and Jordan's blessed  
river?

Shall we not see again thy ramparts rise,  
O Zion, and thy splendid towers rebuilt,  
And God's great Temple set for sacrifice  
By this our race, atoning for our guilt?  
Or must our weary footsteps no more tread  
The land we love, where those we loved are  
dead?

No, we shall see that lovely land no more,  
Nor anything we loved there, place or  
friend,

Nor do, nor know, the things we hungered  
for.

Like darts out of God's Hand our deaths  
descend

To make an end.

Now we can crouch and pray and count the  
hours

Until our murderers' feet are on the stair,  
And bright steel spirts the blood upon our  
hair

And lays us motionless among the flowers,  
White things that do not care.

And afterwards, who knows what moths we'll  
be

Flying about the lamps of life at night  
In death's great darkness, blindly, blunder-  
ingly?

The brook that sings in the grass knows  
more delight,

The ox that the men pole-axe has more  
peace

Than prisoners' souls; but now there comes  
release;

We shall go home, to death, to-morrow night.  
O lamentation, misery, woe, woe!

CURTAIN.

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## ACT II

[AHASUERUS *on his couch.*]

AHASUERUS.

What is the time? I hear the water drip  
Telling the time; and all the Court is still,  
Still as the midnight; not a footstep stirs  
Save the slow sentry on the palace wall.  
No glow of light is in the eastern heaven;  
The barren, dwindled moon her ruddy horn  
Heaves o'er the tree-tops; it is midnight, sure.  
I see Orion falling, and the Dog  
Bright at his heels. Deep midnight. Not a  
    sound  
Save the most patient mouse that gnaws the  
    wainscot.

[*He rises and walks.*]

O weary Time, I cannot sleep to-night.  
All still, all sleep, save only I the King.  
And that great city at the palace foot  
Lies sleeping; yet a strange fear troubles me  
That some there do not sleep, but prepare  
    evil;  
Evil against myself, against the King.  
Those foreigners whom Haman told me of,  
The Jews, who are to die, as Haman urged.  
Excellent Haman, guardian of my throne.  
It may be that this warning comes too late.

What if those Jews be coming even now  
By the black alleys of that sleeping city  
Into my palace, up the guarded stairs  
From floor to floor, along the corridors,  
Stealthily, with masked eyes, with bated  
    breath,  
On tiptoe to the threshold of my room.  
That captain of my guard has eyed me  
    strangely  
These two nights now; he had an evil look.  
He smiled, but still, his eyes they did not  
    smile.  
Where is my sword? It's here. Look at that  
    door.  
It moved. Was that the wind? Who stands  
    without?  
I see you standing there. Come in there, you.  
Who is it?

GUARD [*Off*].

    The great King's guard is here.  
God save the King! And may he live for  
    ever!

AHASUERUS.

Give me a cup of drink. I thirst. I thank  
    you.  
You men were sleeping when I called for you.  
Sing, that I know you watching till I sleep.

[*The SOLDIERS hum and sing together.*

*AHASUERUS settles to his sleep again.*

*He rouses up and walks again.]*

There is a something evil in this room;  
I seem to give it power by lying down.  
It is as though the dark were full of souls  
That wait till I am helpless and then come  
Out of the corners, out of the air itself,  
About my body; but, being up, they fly.  
See, there is nothing here. I pass my hand—

[*He goes round feeling the walls.*]

Here, here, and here. I do not like that  
corner:

Is the thing there? The shadow on the wall  
Is like the black head of an African  
Thrown back in mockery, and it seems to  
move—

To move a little forward. It is but shadow.  
Yes, you are only shadow on the wall,  
Not what you thought.

And yet I know this room  
Is living with the spirits of evil things;  
Spirits of evil things that I have done.  
It is so difficult to be a King,  
To wear the crown and to be ringed with  
death;

To order "Thus," with little time to think,  
No time to know, but to be just, far-seeing,  
Wise, generous, strict and yet most merciful,



As though one knew.

Now one by one they come,  
Those plotters who defied me, whom I killed,  
Crucified, burned, impaled, or tore with  
horses,  
Men who with white lips cursed me, going  
to death.

[*He turns.*]

Yes, you pale ghosts, I mastered you in life,  
And will in death. I hold an Empire up,  
A thing that IS; no glimmering dream of  
boys  
Or what might be, but will not till men  
change;  
No phantom Paradise of vengeance glutted  
By poor men upon rich men, but a world  
Rising and doing its work and lying down  
Because my fierceness keeps the wolves at  
bay.

And yet, those Jews, even at my palace door,  
So Haman said, have had my death contrived.  
What if that Captain be in league with them?  
Guard! Is Hydaspes there?

GUARD.

He is here, great King. Hydaspes, the King  
calls.

[*HYDASPES enters.*]

HYDASPES.

Lord! Do you call?

AHASUERUS.

Come in. Let fall the hanging. Come you  
there

Into the moonlight, that I see your face.

[HYDASPES comes down Left.]

Let me be sure that no one crawls behind  
you.

Hold out your hands, so; let me see the  
fingers.

Stay there. No nearer.

You have travelled far?

HYDASPES.

I have been far, among the Indian lands.

AHASUERUS.

And saw strange peoples?

HYDASPES.

Some.

AHASUERUS.

Which were the strangest?

HYDASPES.

Those of Tibet, who made their pence of gold,  
And reckoned costly things by cups of water.

AHASUERUS.

What next seemed strange to you?

HYDASPES.

The Tartar horsemen  
Who live on cheese of mare's milk and go on  
For ever over never-ending grass,  
And have no home except the black felt tent  
And the great plain and the great sky and  
silence.

AHASUERUS.

A good life, that, for men. Who, next to  
those?

HYDASPES.

The race of Sittras by the sacred river;  
They are all men, grown grey; no women  
there.  
They have put by their wives and families,  
Their crowns, their swords, their households  
and their cares,  
And seek for wisdom there, until they die.

AHASUERUS.

Do they find wisdom?

HYDASPES.

No, but they find peace.

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AHASUERUS.

Do they, by Heaven; as a dead man does.  
Wisdom is life upon the tickle edge,  
Not the blind staring of the stupefied  
At nothing out of nothing. I envy you  
For travelling thus and seeing all these  
things,  
Which I shall only hear of.

Tell me now,  
When you were wandering, did you meet the  
Jews?

HYDASPES.

No, never, Lord.

AHASUERUS.

Nor heard about their race?

HYDASPES.

Not in the East.

AHASUERUS.

But in the West you have?

HYDASPES.

Yes, here at home.

AHASUERUS.

What have you heard?

HYDASPES.

That they are heathen men,  
Brought from beyond the desert in the wars;  
Not desert savages, nor civilised,  
But enemies of both.

AHASUERUS.

Who told you this?

HYDASPES.

Prince Haman told me.

AHASUERUS.

They are now condemned;  
They have been plotting here. You do not  
know  
Any of their rebellious stock, by chance?

HYDASPES.

No, Lord, not one.

AHASUERUS.

Go to that door, Hydaspes.  
Is someone listening to us as we speak?

HYDASPES [*Going to door.*]

No, Lord; the guard is at the door beyond.

AHASUERUS.

Come nearer me. That captain of the guard,  
Is he a Jew?

HYDASPES.

No, Lord, a Persian, surely,  
Pordánatha, from lovely Arisai,  
The city white like snow; Persian as you.

AHASUERUS.

Thank you, Hydaspes.  
These times are dangerous. Go now from  
here,  
See the guards doubled at Queen Esther's  
doors.  
These Jews are secret like that desert tribe  
Whom none has seen, who walk the moonless  
night  
And strike men dead, and go, and leave no  
trace  
Save the dead body.

HYDASPES.

I will place the guards  
Myself, great King.

[*Exit* HYDASPES.]

AHASUERUS.

Esther, the Queen, not yet a trusted Queen.  
Not lightly can an Emperor put his trust  
In man or woman. She is proud, and pride  
Is slow to give or take in confidence

How the Queen Vashti comes into my mind!  
She disobeyed my order at the feast,  
So she is put away, and lives in exile.  
How little quiet have I known since then!  
Plot, plot and counterplot, and none to  
comfort,

Nor to advise, as Vashti used to do.  
Was it a plot that made her disobey?  
I sent Prince Memucan to bring her to me:  
He brought back word that she refused to  
come.

How if Prince Memucan were lying to me?  
Misquoting what she said, to make me rage  
And put her from her place beside my  
throne?

For since she went, Prince Memucan has been  
About me day and night, and grows in power.  
Who are the comrades of Prince Memucan?  
Meres, Adathan; but his chiefest friend  
Is Haman, my most trusted councillor.  
Haman, my friend, to whom I love to give  
Princedom and palaces and silver mines.  
And yet, what if the two conspired together  
To rid me of the Queen, that they might rule  
me?

I will send Memucan beyond the seas  
Upon some dangerous mission of great  
honour:

He shall away to-morrow in all haste.

But Haman I can trust.

*[He tries to compose himself to sleep.]*

Princedom, and palaces, and silver mines,  
Pomps, glories, splendours, princedom,  
palaces—

Vashti the Queen, and enemies, and princedom—

A long, long life, and heavy hours of time!

*[He sleeps. A clink of metal to mark passage of time.]*

AHASUERUS *[Starting up.]*

It was not I,  
It was the slave Harbonah poisoned him,  
Not I. I was not there. I never knew.  
Horrible white face with the blotch of death;  
Harbonah gave it in the honey cake—  
The honey cake, I never gave it you.  
I was not at the feast, it is well known  
I was most sick that night.

*[He wakes.]*

Merach! Merach! begone! It was not  
Merach,

But someone at the footing of the bed.  
Someone, a Jew, with bones instead of face  
And blood that dripped.

*[He gropes at foot of bed. He rises.]*

O blessed night, so full of peace, so calm,  
After that horror.



Ah! I know it now,  
What the Chaldean told me long ago,  
That I should know no quiet rest at night,  
Being a King, unless I ate of bread  
Baked in a house where sorrow never came.  
O blessed bread, would I could eat of thee!

[*Goes Back.*]

Guards! are the gates secure?

[GUARDS *Off*].

God save the King!  
The King's gates are made sure, and the  
gates' keys  
Here, under guard. May the King live for  
ever!

AHASUERUS.

The sentries on the walls; do they report  
All quiet in the city?

GUARD.

All, great King.

AHASUERUS.

No armed men moving, no suspicious thing?

GUARD.

Nothing, O Son of Heaven, but silent dark-  
ness,

And here and there a priest of the great sun  
Praying long life and blessing on our Mon-  
arch.

AHASUERUS.

Long life, long misery!  
It is within this room the horror is—  
That thing, that Jew, that thing out of the  
grave.

No, nothing, nothing! I can see there's  
nothing.

So—I will sleep. I will repeat that song  
Made long ago by one who could not sleep,  
To help his fellow-sufferers.

[*Repeats.*]

*Along the beach a wave comes slowly in,  
And breaks, and dies away, and dies away;  
The moon is dimmed and all the ropes  
are taut.*

*Along the beach a wave comes slowly in,  
And breaks and dies away, and dies away,  
It is no season, sailor, to quit port.*

*Along—etc.*

[*He sleeps.*] [*Enter GHOST OF THARES.  
The GHOST comes behind AHASUERUS  
and across stage. It stands still and  
hinnies like a snipe.*]

AHASUERUS [*In his sleep*].

O no! Spare me! Spare me!  
Loose me my hands. O they have tied my  
feet!

I cannot get from bed, and now they come.  
Merciful Gods! my thigh-bones are both  
broken.

I cannot stir. Who is it gibbering there?  
Who are you? Who?

THARES [*In a disguised, piping voice*].

The shadow of what I was,  
Come for your blood.

AHASUERUS.

I'll give you gold—my kingdom—  
But let me go!

THARES [*Creeping slowly across, hands out*].

I cannot, Ahasuerus,  
I want your life, the soul out of your body.  
See, I come nearer and a little nearer,  
A little nearer still, and put out hands—  
Lean, skinny hands, that used to serve your  
food,  
Thin hands to put your powerless hands  
aside  
And take you by the throat as now I do,

And squeeze, and squeeze the life out of your  
flesh!

[*He begins to strangle AHASUERUS.*]

AHASUERUS [*With effort*].

Ah, gods! He kills me! Kills me!

Out, O gods!

Hydaspes! Help!

Hydaspes! Guards! Hydaspes!

[*Exit THABES, L.*]

HYDASPES [*R.*].

Lord!

AHASUERUS.

The villain strangled me. It was a dream.

A dreadful dream! And yet I knew his  
face.

Who was the man? One who made plots  
against me,

And died, from torture, as a due reward.

Who was the man?

Go, bring the records here,

The wise Chaldeans and the record-writers,

And let them read the records, for I know

The man's name will be there.

[*Exit HYDASPES.*]

It was his spirit.

An evil thing, a harbinger of evil,

A plotter coming as the vulture comes  
Before the corpse. But the Chaldean scribes  
Will know his name, and by their magicry  
Tell me what evil comes.

Thares it was—

Thares, the man was, who was put to  
death

For plotting with the other, Bigdana.

[*Goes Back.*]

Let pass the wise Chaldeans when they come.

THE GUARD [*Off*].

God save the King! May the King live for  
ever!

CURTAIN.

## NIREUS

### I

Once long ago young Nireus was the King  
In Symé Island, so the stories say,  
And at his birth the gods made holiday  
And blessed the child and gave him each one  
thing—

Courage, and skill, and beauty, and bright  
eyes,  
Wisdom, and charm, and many another  
power—

So that he grew to manhood like a flower  
For beauty, and like God for being wise

Now Nireus' friend was Paris, out of Troy,  
Paris, the prince, the archer, who had seen  
The goddesses within the forest green,  
King Priam's son, a peacock of a boy.

At Sparta's court, not far from Symé Isle,  
Bright Helen lived, King Menelaus' Queen,  
The loveliest woman that has ever been,  
Who made all mortals love her by her smile.

Nireus and Paris went together there  
To Helen's palace; and when Nireus saw  
Helen the queen, the lovely without flaw,  
He loved her like her shadow everywhere.

And Paris, when he saw her with her mate,  
Helen, the rose, beside that withered weed,  
Loved her no less, but with a young man's  
greed,  
That wants the moon from heaven and cannot wait.

Straightway he wooed Queen Helen to be  
his,  
And won her love, and cried to Nireus then,  
"O Nireus, help to save us from this den,  
Lend us your ship to bring us out of this."

So Nireus, though his heart was torn with  
pain,  
Well knowing what would come, yet took  
the pair  
To many-towered Troy and left them there  
To live in love and be the city's bane.

When Menelaus knew of Helen's flight,  
He led all Greece in arms to punish Troy,  
Nireus went with him in the fleet, and joy  
Ceased in the world, for all men went to fight.

Nine years they fought there in the tamarisk  
field,  
And in the tenth, in some blind midnight  
stour,  
Nireus killed Paris underneath the tower.  
Men bore him back to Helen on his shield.

Then Troy was sacked and Menelaus took  
Beautiful Helen as his prisoner home  
And locked her in his castle as a gnome  
Might lock a gem on which no man might  
look.

Thus Nireus lost his love, and killed his  
friend,  
And knew despair, so going to his ship,  
He sailed to where the constellations dip,  
In the great west, to look for the world's end.

## II

When Troy was sacked and all her towers  
Blazed up and shook into the sky,  
Smoke like great trees and flame like flowers,  
And Priam's bodyguard did die.

Then the Queen's women snatched up spears  
And fought their way out of the gate  
Seized horses from the charioteers  
And fled like mountain-streams in spate.

They would not stay for slavery  
To some Greek lord until they died,  
They rode the forest to be free  
Up, on the peaks of snowy Ide.

And in the forest on a peak  
They hewed a dwelling with the bronze  
And lived, unconquered by the Greek,  
Fierce, sun-burned women, neither tame nor  
weak,  
The panther-women called the Amazons.

They lived there on the heights and knew no  
men.  
Having beheld the lusts of men destroy  
The town of windy Troy,  
They killed all men they met; their only  
joy  
Was hunting for the wild beasts in the glen.



The wild-boar and the many-branching stag,  
Horse-killing panthers hidden by the brook,  
The spotted death among the yellow flag,  
All these with their bright spears these  
women took.

All these, and men, for even to be seen  
By men, these hunter women thought un-  
clean.

So no man saw them save a glimpse afar  
Of panther-skins flung back, and swift feet  
flying,  
And the red stag brought low to the fierce  
Ha!  
Of women's spear-thrusts driven in the  
dying.  
They ruled the crags like wolves, they kept  
their pride  
Savage and sovereign like the snow on Ide.

### III

Nireus sailed ; and a strange wind blew him to  
islands unseen before,  
Where the gods sat throned on the crags  
with peace on their marvellous faces,  
Clouds and the smoke of fire, that glittered  
and changed, they wore ;  
And unto them came the crying of all man's  
sorrowful races.

They cried to him as he passed, "You are  
seeking and you shall find,  
Not in the way you hope, not in the way  
foreseen,  
Out of horror of soul, ache, and anguish of  
mind,  
Out of the desert of all, shall come the  
leaf that is green."

Then the wind blew on to an island where  
millet is ever in ear,  
And the horses that live in the sea come  
thronging in thousands to eat,  
And the horses that live on the island will  
never let them come near,  
But they fight on the beaches forever with  
flashing and thunder of feet.

Then he sailed by invisible islands; he smelt  
the fruit on the trees,  
And heard the noise in the shipyards and  
the crowing of cocks unseen,  
Then sheered from the roar of breakers and  
on over unknown seas  
And ever he grieved for Paris, and thought  
of the beautiful Queen.

He came to the island of sirens, the women  
whose song was such  
That he anchored there for a night to listen  
and sing reply,

Leaving the sail on its yard, leaving the oar  
in its crutch,

A night, as he thought, yet at dawn he  
found a year had gone by.

Then he came to a shore where giants were  
ranked like a standing wood,

They brought him blood of their gods and  
bade him drink at a feast;

And he drank the blood of the gods and  
suddenly understood

All that was said and meant in the crying  
of bird and beast.

Then the wind blew him forth to an ocean  
where islands like heads of kings

Rose in their snows from the sea and cried  
as the glacier cries,

Each to the next his tale of secret terrible  
things

Not yet known to man's brain nor seen by  
his eyes.

And, lo, when he landed for water, the trees  
were all men who spoke.

"Nireus," whispered the aspen; "Mur-  
derer," muttered the beech.

"Traitor, killer of friends, beware," cried  
cedar and oak,

Like the running of storm in the boughs  
they cast the threat of their speech.

And the flowers and fruits on the branches  
would turn to him as he came,  
And, lo, as he looked, they wrought, till out  
of the rose or quince,  
Helen or Paris peered to give him mocking  
or blame,  
Crying from delicate heads, "The killer;  
the traitor prince."

Then he came to a sea of terror, where mon-  
sters rose from the sea,  
Things with the beaks of birds and arms  
like the suckers of vines,  
Things like ghosts in the water coming mo-  
tionlessly  
To tatter the flesh of men with teeth like  
the cactus-spines.

Over unending water ever he held his course,  
Birds that were curses followed, crying  
around and above,  
"Nireus, broken by beauty, broken again by  
remorse,  
Goes to the breaking of death for killing  
his friend and love."

And ever he cursed himself for bringing them  
both to wreck.  
Helen and Paris, the lovely; and ever the  
waves seemed filled

With skull-bones hollow in death that rose  
and peered on the deck,

And he thought, "They are those from  
Troy whom I in my madness killed.

"Had I refused, when they asked for my  
help to escape,

Paris would still be alive, Troy, the city,  
would stand,

And all the killed of the war would be tilling  
the corn and the grape,

Not ghosts with a curse in the air and torn  
bones strewing the land."

So he sailed, but at night in the dark when  
the lantern bubbled aloft,

And men lay sleeping, when all save he  
were asleep,

And the ship slid on with a gurgle of water  
soft

He knew that the dead of Troy came with  
him over the deep.

Out of the long-backed roller that slid from  
its crest of foam

Gibbered the bloodless dead, white faces  
with haggard eyes,

Pointing the bones of their hands at him who  
had forced them from home,

Their curses came to his ears like little  
twittering cries.

Whenever he moored at an island for water  
or food or rest,  
Soon those wraiths of the dead would rise  
and bid him begone,  
To harry the resting gannet out of the  
roller's crest  
And carry the curse of his soul to the un-  
known on and on.

#### IV

In the grey of morning  
When the stars were paling  
Nireus sailing  
Saw land ahead;  
An island shining  
With city towers  
Where bells were ringing  
And men singing.

As Nireus stepped ashore there  
He stood staring,  
For all men there  
Were the dead of the war;  
The Greeks and Trojans,  
Beautiful and swift,  
Killed in the trampled tamarisks  
Beneath Troy town.

Stars were in their hair,  
Their brows were crowned with violets,  
They stepped like stags,  
Comrade with comrade.  
They had forgotten  
The mud and death,  
The heat and flies  
Of the plain of Troy.

There among them  
Came a prince in scarlet  
With his hands stretched  
In welcoming.  
It was Paris, his friend,  
Paris whom he killed  
In the midnight raid  
Beneath Troy wall.

Paris cried,  
"Nireus, my comrade,  
Nireus, my beloved,  
My friend of old.  
Here we have forgiven  
What my young man's folly bred.  
We feast as friends  
In the violet fields."

Then he led Nireus  
To the hall of feasting.  
There they feasted

In the violet fields.  
Three summer days and nights,  
It seemed, they feasted.  
Each summer day and night  
Was ten years long.

Paris and the heroes  
Cried to Nireus,  
"We loved Helen,  
When we were men.  
Now we love her still,  
And we see her lonely,  
Old, and haunted  
By her lovers dead.

"Take to Helen  
Gifts from her lovers,  
In her old age find her,  
And give her these:  
Beauty and peace  
And our forgiveness,  
And all our thanks  
For what she was."

As they ceased speaking,  
They faded from him,  
The island faded,  
Nireus was at sea.  
He and his men



Were all grown old,  
Thirty years  
Had fallen on them.

As old men failing  
They came to Sparta,  
All unavailing  
Their coming was.  
Helen was gone,  
And none knew whither,  
To search for peace  
Or to find release.

Over the seas  
In lands and islands  
Nireus sought her  
But could not find.  
For the gods retire  
What men desire  
Though it burn like fire  
And make men blind.

## V

Full of years and wealth, and evil, Menelaus  
died in Sparta,  
And Queen Helen at his bedside stood and  
looked upon him dead,

He who once had bought her beauty, to be  
bride to him, by barter,  
He whom she had loathed and fled from,  
now lay silenced on the bed.

Bitter thoughts were in her as she looked  
upon his meanness,  
Thoughts of Paris in his beauty when their  
love was at its height,  
Paris in his morning, and the King in his  
uncleanness,  
And this dead mean thing, her master, and  
the winner of the fight.

All was silent in the palace of the King,  
Save the soft-foot watchers whispering,  
All was dark, save in the porch  
The wind-blown fire of a torch,  
And the sentries still as in a stound  
With their spear-heads drooped upon the  
ground.

Then she thought: "These two men had me,  
and a myriad men have sickened  
To a fever of a love for me who saw me  
passing by:  
When they saw me, all their eyes grew bright,  
and all their pulses quickened,  
And to win me or to keep me they went up  
to Troy to die.

"Now the earthly moon, my beauty, and the  
rose, my youth, have dwindled,  
I am old, my hair is grey, and none remem-  
bers  
What a fire in men's hearts Queen Helen  
kindled  
Ere the fire in Queen Helen turned to  
embers."

All was silent in the palace of the King,  
Save the wind-blown torch-flame gutter-  
ing,  
And a moth that came  
Beating with his wings about the flame,  
And the sentries drawing breath,  
With their spear-heads drooped saluting  
death.

Then she said: "The gods conspired to give  
gifts of beauty to me,  
And the beauty gave the gift of death to all  
who came to woo me;  
Now of all the men who loved me, none  
remain,  
And of both the men who had me neither  
knew me—  
Surely all my past was evil, for its fruit is  
bitter pain.

"I will go to some lone island where I am  
not made a story,  
Where my beauty made no widow, nor no  
orphan wanting bread;  
Where no human sorrow suffers the disaster  
of my glory  
And my eyes may lose the vision of the  
hauntings of the dead.

*"Day and night the dead men haunt me,*  
whom the madness of my caring  
Brought from home and wives and children  
to be bones upon the plain;  
All the panther-like for beauty, all the lion-  
like for daring,  
And they lie among the bindweed now,  
uncovered by the rain."

All was silent in the palace of the King  
Save the soft-foot watchers whispering;  
All was dark, save in the porch  
The wind-blown fire of a torch,  
And the sentries still as in a stound  
With their spear-heads drooped upon the  
ground.

Then she rose, and cloaked her face, and  
hurried swiftly from the city,  
And to sea, away from Hellas, but she  
dared not show her face,

For the women and the orphans would have  
killed her without pity;  
She had sown her crop of death too far, she  
found no resting-place.

But in inns where people gathered in the  
evenings after labour,  
Where the shepherd's pipe or viol stirred  
the blind man to his verse,  
Till the hearers swayed and trembled and  
the rough man touched his neighbour,  
They would talk of Troy with sadness, but  
of Helen with a curse.

## VI

After long years, when Helen was riding by  
night  
In storm, in the Ida forest, alone, not know-  
ing the road,  
She saw a light in the blackness, she turned  
to the light,  
She came to the fort on the crag, the pan-  
ther-women's abode.

Hearing her horse's stamp, they brought her  
into the yard,  
Those women fierce from the killing of lion  
or boar or man;

They came with their torches round her, they  
stared at her hard,  
They knew her for Helen the Queen from  
whom their sorrows began.

For years they had longed for her coming,  
to have her to kill,  
Her beauty a throat for their knives, her body  
a prey,  
Helen, who ruined their lovers, the root of  
their ill,  
She said, "I am Helen. Avenge yourselves on  
me. You may."

Still they stared at her there in the torch-  
light; then one of them said,  
"God used you, to bring things to be; evil  
things to our city,  
Evil things to yourself, for your face de-  
clares you have paid;  
You have come to the truth like ourselves; we  
take not vengeance, but pity."

Then they welcomed her in to their hold, and  
when morning broke clear  
They rode with her down to the ruins of what  
had been Troy.

There they left her alone in the wreck of  
the thing overdear  
That the gods cannot grant to mankind, but  
unite to destroy.

## VII

Queen Helen left those women of the wood,  
She clambered from her horse and stood  
again  
Even on the very hill where Troy had stood,  
Where tamarisk shrubs and broom sprigs  
and wild grain  
Sprouted from bronze and rib-bones of  
men slain.

There was the palace where her love had  
been;  
Stones blackened by the fire and misplac'd  
By roots of vines that fed upon the paste  
Of all the pride where she had lived a queen.

Troy was no more than weeds and fire-flaked  
stone,  
But still the Straits ran roaring to the  
south,  
And still the never-quiet winds were blown  
With scent of meadow-sweet from Simois'  
mouth.

Yet now no Greeks were moving on the  
beaches,  
No galleys of the Greeks came oaring in,  
Nor did lancer scouts or parties ride the  
whin  
Bringing in or checking convoys from the  
river's upper reaches  
Where the forest pines begin.

And the forges were all gone, and all the  
fires  
Of the camps and burnings of the dead;  
And the grinding of the bronze-shod chariot-  
tyres  
Rang no more.  
Both in city and on shore  
There were no more shouted orders, clash of  
arms or marchers' tread.

All was manless, now, uncared for; both the  
streams had left their courses;  
There was marsh where corn had grown of  
old; and there, where Paris lay,  
Was an apple-tree with fruit which fed the  
now wild Trojan horses  
That with bright teeth bit each other.  
Earth made Greek and Trojan brother;  
All the passion that had raged there now  
was dead and gone away.



Then she cried, "I caused the quarrel that  
brought death along these beaches;  
I alone made Troy this ruin, I alone, from  
haste of youth,  
From a woman's bent, that listens to a lie, if  
it beseeches.  
Now I stand here old and friendless, having  
nothing but the truth."

There she stopped, for there, before her, in  
the ruins, stood a stranger:  
"This is changed, indeed," he told her,  
"since I stood here once before:  
Then it flamed all red to heaven and it rang  
with death and danger,  
And I stood here with noble Agamemnon  
In the thunder of the ending of the war."

Something in the old man's bearing made her  
start and catch her breath.  
"You are Nireus, friend," she answered;  
"you are he who brought me here,  
When my life and love were dear:  
Then I came to life and loving, now I come  
to grief and death.

"There is no small grass, in plain or water,  
But grows from the body of one killed  
By the deadly love of me, who am Helen,  
Leda's daughter;

All the young and swift and lovely, all the  
quick of heart, are stilled,  
I was cause of their going to the slaughter.

“Daylong and nightlong their shadows pursue me with evil,  
Haunting my thought in the day, killing  
my rest in the night,  
Now they have drawn me here; their multitudinous devil  
Bids me die where I sinned.  
I hear their cry in the wind,  
I see their eyes in the light.”

Nireus answered, “Ah, not thus, not so, Queen Helen, surely,  
Are those who died for love of you, to win you or to keep.  
If they gave their lives, they gave them, as a man gives, frankly, purely,  
Without question, comment or complaint,  
The strong heart equal with the faint,  
All content to see your beauty and to tread hard ways to sleep.

“Now they know that your beauty made them splendid  
Splendid to the death, for I have seen,

Seen and talked, beloved Helen, with the  
souls of those who ended  
In the ruins of this city that has been,  
And they praise your name, they count you  
still their queen.

"Now, come with me, for the ship waits to  
receive you,  
The wind is fair to Symé; let us start.  
Here, where long ago I lost you, I retrieve  
you,  
Let us leave this town of broken heart  
For the peace of Symé harbour and the  
mirth of Symé mart  
And the calm of knowing sorrow at an  
end  
And the quiet of the memory of a friend."

Then they sailed for Symé island, and the  
gods were with their going.  
For their beauty came upon them both,  
with youth and strength and peace.  
Now they rule and live forever in a spring  
forever blowing  
High in Symé where the sun is bright and  
skylarks never cease.

## SONNETS

Once we were masters of the arts of men.  
Poetry, music, painting, building, all  
Beautiful noble arts were ours then,  
Decking this England as for festival.

A son of England could not lift his head  
Then without knowing rapture of delight.  
The English hedgerow rose of beauty shed  
Into all English hearts its red and white.

Our current coins bore then the sacred stamp  
Of style in the used thing. In the world's  
tower  
In space's darkness, England was a lamp.  
Her lovely brain beheld; her hand had  
power

In these two things alone, her spirit shows  
Her Saint was then Saint George, her mark,  
a rose.

Builted in every village in the land,  
Cut in the lasting stonework, you will find  
Marvellous relics that an English hand  
Left as the tokens of an English mind.

Their spires (rough stone translated) lift  
aloft,  
Their gargoyles grin, their bells, in bel-  
fries dark,

Still dole the time by hours to the croft,  
Columns still bear the towers and are  
stark.

Over all England beauty was like June  
Deep in men's spirits, when we made these  
things,

Nightingales, dew, the dogrose and the moon,  
Beauty of queens, authority of kings,

And faith of men, all merged, that centuries  
on

Eternal things should shine as then they  
shone.

I saw the work of all the world displayed,  
The thinkers of the theatres of earth  
Sent, to be shown the utmost they had made,  
Much of it mad, much pleasant, some of  
worth.

But, worthiest of it all, this English man's  
Stood out supreme, as, in a paling sky,  
When stars go out, the morning planet scans  
Our twilit world with an untroubled eye.

There the work stood for England, and made  
mute

Our enemies who mocked us with decay;  
There was a life's devotion come to fruit,  
Enduring beauty keeping death at bay.

Here is the work. Who, greater than his age,  
Will use this work to consecrate the stage?

I cannot tell who will, but only know  
That faithful work was never yet forlorn.  
The best abides, the lusts and fashions go,  
Time and the grasses cover over scorn.

By unexpected ways despaired-of things  
Come into being after hope has ceast.  
Over our fainting shoulders there are wings,  
By unseen hands our harvest is increast.

Here in our darkness now the powers of light  
Stir us to change this land that we have  
filled  
With squalor and with nightmare and with  
night,  
To Beauty's self; they summon to rebuild,

Rebuild in beauty on the burnt-out coals,  
Not to the heart's desire, but the soul's.

\* \* \* \* \*

I saw the racer coming to the jump  
Staring with fiery eyeballs as he rusht;  
I heard the blood within his body thump,  
I saw him launch, I heard the toppings  
crusht.

And as he landed I beheld his soul  
Kindle, because, in front, he saw the  
Straight  
With all its thousands roaring at the goal,  
He laughed, he took the moment for his  
mate.

Would that the passionate moods on which  
we ride  
Might kindle thus to one-ness with the  
will;  
Would we might see the end to which we  
stride,  
And feel, not strain in struggle, only thrill,

And laugh like him and know in all our  
nerves  
Beauty, the spirit, scattering dust and turves.

## BEAUTY

When soul's companion fails,  
When flesh (that neighed once) ails,  
When body shortens sails,

O soul, break through the netting  
Of failing and forgetting,  
See clearer for sun-setting;

See clearer, and be cheerly,  
See thou the image clearly,  
Love thou the image dearly.

For out of love and seeing  
Beauty herself has being,  
Beauty our queen;  
Who with calm spirit guards us  
And with dear love rewards us  
In courts forever green.



